To Know HIM and
To Make HIM Known

[redacted]

Abrahams, Israel, 1858-1925.

Festival studies

LIBRARY
COLUMBIA BIBLE COLLEGE
P.O. Box 3122
Columbia, SC 29230

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/unset0000unse_k7m0

JUN 10 '15

G. J. Klingeman

FESTIVAL STUDIES

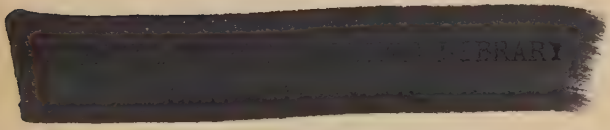
FESTIVAL STUDIES

BEING THOUGHTS ON THE JEWISH YEAR

BY

ISRAEL ABRAHAMS, M.A.

READER IN TALMUDIC TO THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE



London

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED

1906

All rights reserved

Printed by Ballantyne, Hanson & Co.
At the Ballantyne Press

DEDICATED

IN GRATEFUL AFFECTION

To the Memory of

ASHER I. MYERS

(*1848–1902*)

18875

PREFACE

Most of the contents of this volume have been published over a long series of years in the London *Jewish Chronicle*. The earliest appeared in 1887, the latest in 1905. Chapters IV., V., XX. and XXII. have not been printed before; the others (which have been in some cases revised) are now reproduced by kind permission of the editor of the periodical named.

These papers were mainly written with no other intention than to provide momentary entertainment or to provoke passing thought as the festivals of the Jewish year occurred. Though the volume has been entitled "Studies," there is nothing formal or systematic about it. But the aspects of Jewish life which these papers express are not very often presented in English, and it has seemed worth while to collect some of the papers into a little volume.

One charm the volume must possess. Some beautiful renderings of medieval Hebrew poems

will be found in various chapters. The translations on pages 12, 29–31, 98, 99, 100–101 and 102 are the work of Mrs. H. Lucas; those on pages 58 and 82–3 are by Mrs. R. N. Salaman.

The volume is dedicated to the memory of a dear friend, Mr. Asher I. Myers, the "only begetter" of most of the book. It was due to his suggestion that the series of papers was undertaken, and it was his warm encouragement that induced the writer to persevere.

CAMBRIDGE, *August* 1905.

CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	The Hopefulness of the Seder (*Passover*)	1
II.	The Poetry of Pentecost (*Pentecost*)	5
III.	The Procession of the Palms (*Tabernacles*)	13
IV.	The Book of Life (*New Year*)	19
V.	The Abodah (*Day of Atonement*)	25
VI.	Purim Parodies (*Purim*)	32
VII.	Art on the Seder Table (*Passover*)	40
VIII.	A Unique Haggadah Picture (*Passover*)	48
IX.	The Succah of the Bible (*Tabernacles*)	56
X.	Some Succahs I have Known (*Tabernacles*)	63
XI.	Judæa Devicta (*Fast of Ab*)	76
XII.	The Decalogue in the Liturgy (*Pentecost*)	84
XIII.	By the Water-side (*New Year*)	91
XIV.	God and Man (*Day of Atonement*)	96
XV.	Chad Gadya (*Passover*)	103
XVI.	Myrtle (*Tabernacles*)	111
XVII.	Willows of the Brook (*Tabernacles*)	119
XVIII.	Queen Esther on the English Stage (*Purim*)	124

CHAP. PAGE
XIX. Hans Sachs' "Esther" (*Purim*) . . . 132
XX. The Shofar (*New Year*) 139
XXI. Hanucah in Olden Times (*Hanucah*) . . 145
XXII. The Hallel (*Festivals*) 156
XXIII. The Four Sons (*Passover*) 167
XXIV. Adon Olam (*Daily Hymn*) 174

I

THE HOPEFULNESS OF THE SEDER

"God's in my home, all's well with His world" —so might be written the motto of Judaism. Storm might rage outside, calm reigned within, when the hunted Jew had shut the door on the street. "Thou preparest a table for me in the presence of mine enemies; Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over."

But on the Passover eve this sense of security was stronger. How characteristic of Jewish optimism it is to read in various editions of the Seder—that oldest of domestic services, with which the Passover eve is ushered in—"They open the door as a reminder that it is a Night of Protection (*lel shimmurim*), and the door need not be shut, for there is no danger to-night." What splendid hopefulness! Need one recall the melancholy, the awful truth? Need one re-tell how Justinian and Recared interdicted the Passover; how Popes and Potentates permitted riotous attacks at Easter against the "desecrators of the sacred Host" (or wafer); how the medieval mob (with, alas, some modern imitators) made the

Passover eve hideous by a foul accusation? "There is no danger to-night"—is the answer of the Seder to those fears and foes. Truly there *is* no danger to Judaism while such eternal hope prevails over present despair.

The Messiah, too, is coming to-night. The door is open for him. The same open door that bids defiance to the dread of the night bids welcome to the radiance of the morning. The Messiah is coming. So for fifteen centuries Jews have hoped on every Passover. That the Messiah has *not* come, matters nothing. "Man never is, but ever to be blessed." Hope again triumphs over experience. "Next year in Jerusalem." So have we all said since childhood. I heard a grey-beard repeating it in Jerusalem itself. "What," I said, "you are here and I am here. Let us say: Next year also in Jerusalem." "No," replied the cheery nonagenarian, "next year in Jerusalem the Rebuilt (*Ha-benuya*)." The old man firmly hoped that by the following spring the Temple would be restored, and he would go up with a joyous throng to the Mount of the House. Two Passovers have gone since then. The old man still lives, still hopes. He wrote to me last week: "I am in no mood to hurry God; I am only 92." Truly it is the faith of such as these that will bring the Messiah to men. "Joy shortened the night, and they were not weary," says the Alshech, in commenting on the all-night sitting of the Rabbis at Bene Berak when they discoursed of the departure from Egypt.

Is the hopefulness of the Seder a mere delusion? The Seder gives the answer. True, the hand of God has sometimes seemed short, and the Passover a night of alarm rather than a night of protection. Look at larger maps, said Lord Salisbury once when Englishmen thought danger very near. Look at larger stretches of history, says the Seder when Jews despond. "Few in number, with but seventy souls went thy fathers down to Egypt, and now thy God hath made thee as numerous as the stars." So the medieval Jew read. So can we read if we have eyes. Since the dispersion, the Jews have continuously increased in numbers. Never, since the second century, have the Jews been as few as when they abode in Palestine. The Seder, then, has this solid fact on which to build. Persecutions come and go, but the Jews go on. "Not one only," says the Seder again, "sought to annihilate us, but men in all generations sought it: and the Holy One, blessed be He, saves us from their hand." *Saves*, says the Seder, not *saved*.

Then comes the counterpart. If God's providence is unbroken, so must be Israel's confidence. God's love knows no years; so in the twentieth century Israel's responsive love must be young and tender as when God made her the bride of His youth. "Not our fathers only did the Holy One redeem from bondage, but us also with them." Here vibrates the living voice of Judaism. This is the true tradition, the chain whose links are human hearts. "Regard thyself as one redeemed."

Can the lover despair of Love? Can the redeemed doubt of the Redeemer? Thus does life wait upon hope: its reality conditioned by the force of our belief in it.

But, says the pessimist, life is not real. Life is unmeaning, it leads nowhere, it breaks off in the middle, it is all path and no goal. Again the hopeful Seder mitigates if it does not solve our doubt. "If God had brought us to Sinai and had not given us the Law (*Dayenu*) it would have been enough for us." The path is enough, leave the goal to God. Go to Sinai, leave the revelation to Him. Take the good thy God provides thee, the more will come. Life's increasing purpose reveals itself as we go farther down the road. Not to dig him a grave in the wilderness did God lead Israel from Egypt, but to draw him nearer to Himself, the eternal goal. "Speedily, speedily, He will build His house" rings the merry Seder song. "Speedily in our days." How long, then, do we expect to live if we are to see it in our days? Death looks at us nearer than does the realisation of any hope. Away with such pessimism, cries the final line of the *Chad Gadya*—the most dazzling piece of optimism of all the Seder. "And the Holy One, blessed be He, will come and slay the Angel of Death." So, in a waking dream of life everlasting, we go to our sleeping dreams on the Seder night. Has the dream touched us? Has it made us hope? If it has, it has made better Jews of us.

II

THE POETRY OF PENTECOST

A SENSE of grateful wonder comes over us as we contrast Pentecost as it is with what it might have been. Thunder and storm raged round Sinai, but there is no storm-note in our Pentecost ceremonies. The synagogue rested on the joyousness, the serenity of the Revelation. Yet there was every temptation towards cheap and dismal terrors. The synagogue might have crushed us with gloomy and severe rites, as though the weight of Sinai had fallen on us. But it rather lifted than imposed a load, and strewed flowers rather than fears in our path.

Pentecost marks the passing of spring. It was not left to Wordsworth to interpret nature in terms of human feeling. Jehuda Halevi long before compared the varying tints of spring to the changing hues of a girl's eyes, and as a deep red blush crept in with early summer, the earth seemed, in the fancy of this Spanish-Jewish poet:—

> "A fair, fond bride that pours
> Warm kisses on her lover."

Medieval poetry suggested to Synagogue as to Church the custom of decking the House of God

at such a time with flowers. When the Amidah prayer was over, boys brought in fragrant bundles of fresh grass, which they strewed on the floor of the synagogue. Roses and lilies first appear in Jewish places of worship in the fourteenth century—this particular custom of introducing cut flowers being imitated from the church. But the imitation was a reversion to older habits. The basket of First Fruits brought to the Temple by every Israelite was an exemplar of dainty tastefulness: the barley was placed undermost, the wheat above it; over the wheat were olives, higher still were dates, while figs formed the apex of the cone. Layers of leaves were arranged between each kind, and clusters of grapes were put round the figs to form the outside margin of the basket. With such a model as this, Jewish taste could not fail to be poetical on Pentecost.

A feature quite original to the Jews was the arrangement round the Ark of young growing trees. "On the Feast of Weeks," says the Talmud, "the world is judged concerning the fruits of the trees." Growing trees were therefore placed in the synagogue, that men might invoke a blessing on them. Or, prettier notion still, the trees were declared a "memorial of the living joy of the Law."

In keeping with this attempt to bring the scent of the flowers and the harvest into the synagogue, the Book of Ruth was included in the liturgy of the day. Why do we spoil so beautiful a custom by scampering through the recitation of this lovely

idyll? It should be read, as it was once read, with a preliminary benediction, or, as the Sephardim still read it, in the afternoon, verse by verse, with lingering tenderness. In parts of the East, the boys translate Ruth into Arabic, and melodiously sing it in the vernacular. In medieval Spain, too, Ruth was translated. Many are the reasons given for reading this book on Pentecost. The real motive of its inclusion was its breath of nature, its harvest tone, so suited to the day of the First Fruits. But some authorities saw in Ruth's answer to Naomi the full acceptance of the Mosaic Law—"thy people shall be my people"—and so it was fitting to read the story of this faithful proselyte on the day which made proselytes of all Israel. Or, again, tradition had it that David was born and died on Pentecost, and the Book of Ruth not only contains David's genealogy but also points to that Messianic branch which shall come forth from the stem of Jesse. This thought was uppermost in the Jewish mind during the weeks intervening between Passover and Pentecost. The Crusades tinged these weeks with a mournful longing for deliverance, and, on the other hand, the Law was the deliverance, then and for all time.

There is a blending of these two thoughts, without, however, any echo of sadness, in the oft-derided *Akdamuth*, or "Introductory Poem," still chanted in some congregations on Pentecost during the reading of the Law. There is a certain virile force in the eighteenth-century melody

to which the *Akdamuth* is sung. It is, I admit, easier to perceive the poetry and beauty of this composition now that it no longer holds a place in the liturgy of one's own synagogue. Barbarous in form, and grotesque in subject matter, this composition, nevertheless, has charms. The very Leviathan that it describes has at least vigour and fascination. The *Akdamuth* is, indeed, not so simply pretty as the hymn by Israel Nagrela to the refrain, "My Beloved came down to his Garden"—a hymn sung while the Scrolls of the Law were carried in procession down the synagogue on Pentecost. It is certainly less dainty than another hymn of the Kalir type, written for the same day, in which the Law speaks thus: "God Himself fostered me, nigh Him He placed me, on His knee he fondled me, and betrothed me to Israel." Or, as Jehuda Halevi puts it—the dove, timid, tractable, loving, representing Israel:—

> "On eagle's wings, O Lord, the dove Thou bear'd'st;
> And she built her nest within Thine inmost heart."

Yet there is one interesting point about the *Akdamuth* which these other poems do not present, for the *Akdamuth*, being written in Aramaic, is a link in the Meturgeman's chain. The Meturgeman of old translated the Scripture into Aramaic, and this Aramaic hymn, composed by "the pious Chazan," Meir ben Isaac, a friend of Rashi, is a survival of the Meturgeman's art. In the Middle Ages the Ten Commandments were still translated and expounded in the vernacular when they were

read on Pentecost. This is the reason why it became customary for the Rabbi to be "called up" on this festival—he expounded the Law as he read it. Hence, too, the introduction into the liturgy of the *Azharoth*, or moral didactic poems, based on the 613 precepts of the Law. Such exhortations (*Azharoth*) belong to the oldest introductions of the Gaonate, almost certainly they begin in the eighth century. Later on, the Gaon Saadia composed such a poem, but the best and most popular was by Solomon Ibn Gebriol, still retained in the Sephardic ritual, but replaced, alas, in the German by far inferior work. They were recited during the Musaph after the words, "by the hands of Moses." A better custom was to read them in the afternoon.

Another poetical survival of the Meturgeman, or Expounder, may be seen in the general deference paid to women and children on Pentecost. It was for the women that the translations were made. The children were introduced to "school" for the first time on Pentecost, and, appropriately enough, took their first lesson in Hebrew reading on that day. The pretty scene has been too often described for me to repeat it. But I cannot help referring to the Midrashic idea connected with this first introduction of the children to the school. "From the mouth of babes and sucklings," says the Psalmist, "Thou didst establish strength." When Israel stood round Sinai, and God asked for sureties to guarantee the fulfilment of the Law, the babes and sucklings, according to the Midrash, answered that *they* would be the pledge, and God

accepted their undertaking. "He who gives a Scroll of the Law to the Synagogue on Pentecost," says one authority, "is as though he brought an offering to God at its due season." Something of the same fancy may be detected also in the introduction of the children to the House of God, in sweetening the Law to them by gifts of honey-cakes.

Who will write on the poetry of foods? Pentecost would add a pleasant chapter to such a history. Honey and milk were favourite ingredients, honey, as we just saw, being given to the children. Milk was for this occasion beloved of the adults. Cheese was an invariable item of the midday meal. Further, cheese-cakes were eaten at the all-night sitting for prayer and song, which occurred on the evening before the festival. Societies were formed in the Middle Ages for arranging these watch-night services and cooking the viands necessary for the occasional refreshment of the company. Milk and honey were appropriate enough, for the text "honey and milk under thy tongue" was applied to the Torah. Or, as a mystic poetically puts it: During the six weeks between Passover and Pentecost blood was turned to milk, judgment to mercy, and on Pentecost itself the "milk of Godly love" flows abundantly. At the all-night sitting, besides many other things from the Bible, Talmud, and Zohar, the Song of Songs was read, for every loving phrase in that collection of poems was applied to God and Israel. It was a poetical thought to read this song; it was a poetical thought to introduce

on the table, both on Pentecost and Passover, the fruits mentioned in its pages. The "Sinai Cake" was another pretty notion—it was made like a ladder with seven rungs, typifying the seven spheres rent by God when He descended to give the law. Less fanciful was the double "Twin-loaf," which bore four heads. The "twins" are the zodiacal sign for the month of Sivan. But the true explanation is different. The "twin loaves" commemorated the two cakes brought as an offering on Pentecost.

One other feature of the Poetry of Pentecost must be noted. The Giving of the Law was the betrothal of Israel either with God or with the Torah—for both ideas prevailed. Processions, mostly imitated from current marriage rites, were profusely organised in the East. Europe seems never to have completely adopted this custom, except in its bridal aspects. It was connected in the Orient with the adoration of the reputed tombs of prophets like Nahum and Ezekiel, but there was nothing at all gloomy in the idea. Jews would go to synagogue and read the early morning service. Then, headed by a Scroll of the Law, the men all armed with various weapons would ascend some neighbouring hill, would read the rest of the morning service on the mimic Sinai, and then would ensue a sham tourney, instruments would be clashed amidst a tremendous din, emblematic of the great Messianic war against vice on the coming day of the Lord. Sometimes in Europe, as in the East, the procession occurred in syna-

gogue without the tourney, yet with dance and song; sometimes, as in Persia, the procession took place in the courtyard at home and a great banquet followed.

This, and much of the same character, may prove how ridiculous is the supposition of certain controversialists that the Law was a burden to the Jews! They concentrated round it all their fancy and love. They sang gleefully as they beheld its sacred pages, as they remembered the life it had brought them, the spiritual serenity it imparted. It was doctrine, and it was joy. As Jehuda Halevi wrote:—

"The Law they received from the mouth of Thy glory
They learn and consider and understand.
O! accept Thou their song, and rejoice in their gladness,
Who proclaim Thy glory in every land."

III

THE PROCESSION OF THE PALMS

PLANTS have a language even outside the albums of sentimental girls. Mystical fancy reads into the gifts of nature a symbolism of the spirit. The palm-tree—closely associated with the Feast of Tabernacles—had an emblematic virtue in ancient Hebrew poetry long before the Midrash likened the palm to the human frame and the citron to the human heart. "The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree," says the 92nd Psalm. The comparison alludes both to the beauty and the material value of the tree, to its stately height and to its sweet fruit. Jewish poets were not wanting in a healthy sense of the comeliness and utility of virtue, and as the ideal Israel represented righteousness, so the palm became a type of Israel's national and religious life. Hence though the palm was by no means plentiful in Palestine, it became a Judean emblem, and the Romans felt that the tree was so intimately connected with the Jews, that when they struck a medal to commemorate the fall of Jerusalem, Judea was represented as a forlorn woman weeping under a palm-tree.

One city of Palestine was, however, famous for

its palms—Jericho, now palm-less, but once "the city of palm-trees." It is at least a remarkable coincidence that the Procession of Palms on Succoth should have another association with Jericho. For, at the siege of that city, the host of Joshua compassed the place seven times with the Ark at the head of the line, and seven priests sounded seven rams' horns. The connection between this scene and the procession round the altar on Tabernacles is obvious enough, but it is impossible to say how old the circuit of the altar is. Possibly it is Maccabean; it is certainly not later. When Judas Maccabeus re-dedicated the altar in 165 B.C., the people carried branches and chanted hymns, among them the 118th Psalm, which in Professor Cheyne's version runs thus in its 27th verse: "Bind the Procession with branches, step on to the altar-horns." Plutarch saw in this procession a species of Bacchanalian rite, but the only resemblance was that the celebrants carried boughs. In the time of the Mishnah any old associations with pagan processions had certainly given way to a purely religious motive. Round and round the altar went the priests, singing "O Lord, save us now; O Lord, save us now." The wilder joyousness of the Water-Drawing on the night of the 15th, and the following five nights of Tishri, with its brilliant illuminations and exciting music, its frantic dances and acrobatic displays, seems indeed a survival of an old-world nature revel. But this, too, was re-interpreted in terms of that beautiful line of Isaiah, which

was foremost in the thoughts of the masses of Jerusalem as they filled the golden ewers at the Pool of Siloam: "With joy shall ye draw water from the wells of salvation."

After the dispersion of Israel, it seems that some attempt was still made to continue the old procession in Jerusalem itself. This was apparently the case also in the Middle Ages. We read that in the time of Hai Gaon it was customary to make a pilgrimage to the Holy City and to walk in circuit round the Mount of Olives. At the present day the residents in and around Jerusalem fix themselves, on the three great feasts, on coigns of vantage, at windows, and on balconies, whence the old Temple wall and Mount Olivet are visible. This mountain is associated with the Feast of Tabernacles, as indicated in the 14th chapter of Zechariah, a passage which the Synagogue has adopted as the Haftara for the first day of Succoth. Jerusalem, however, was inaccessible to the Jews in pre-Islamic times, and even later. The Synagogue perforce replaced the Temple, and the Torah became Israel's altar; the old procession was transferred to the ordinary houses of worship, with the Torah instead of the altar as the centre of the circuit. Here, however, two kinds of procession must be distinguished. The older was what we now understand as the Circuit of the Palms; the later is what we may term the Circuit of the Scrolls.

The Circuit of the Scrolls takes place, of course, in the ninth day of Tabernacles (Simchath Torah),

and, so far as Europe is concerned, is restricted to "German" congregations. On the eve of the Day of Atonement the Sephardim, indeed, take the Scrolls from the Ark, but there is no procession. Despite its connection with David's dancing exploit, which his wife so grievously misunderstood, the Procession of Scrolls on Simchath Torah, like the Procession of the Chassidim on Friday nights, is modelled rather on the marriage rites of the Middle Ages than on the Temple service of ancient days. In some places the Bridegroom of the Law actually wore the Crown of Gold which usually adorned the Sefer Torah, and, as a set-off, the current bridal ceremonies were transferred to the Scroll.

How unlike to this was the Procession of the Palms is clear from the characteristic difference that the Scroll of the Law, which was taken out before the circuit, was kept stationary on the Bimah, while the worshippers walked round in solemn array. This was one of the reasons why in mediæval synagogues the Bimah, or Reading Desk, was placed in the middle of the building, for had it occupied any other position, processions would have been robbed of their spectacular effect. "Walk about Zion, go round about her" (Psalm xlviii. 12), was the favourite text on people's lips. "Save us now," rang the Hosanna cries; mingling prayer with praise. For, to cite but one of the many beautiful figures to be found in this connection in Jewish books, the Hosanna sounded at once a note of triumph and of wailing; the Scroll of the

Law was as the banner displayed in the centre of the camp, while round about it marched victorious Israel, fresh from its triumph over sin won on the Day of Atonement, brandishing the palm, symbol of the righteousness by which sin is conquered, yet chanting the mystic refrain, "I and He; Save us now," a phrase capable of many meanings, but not inaptly rendered by the Mechilta, "I and He, man and God, needed both for salvation, man's effort to be like God, God's grace to remember that man is but man." I have freely turned this Mechilta, but I do not think that this version does real violence to the spirit of the passage.

"He who has a Palm-branch yet joins not in the Procession, does ill," says the Jewish rubric. Self-consciousness is fatal to the picturesqueness of public worship. It is not the arrogance of the clergy, but the false modesty of the laity that is thrusting the ordinary Jew from his share in the service of the synagogue. Why there should be a disposition to allow the beautiful Procession of the Palms to become obsolete is hardly explicable on any other ground. Perhaps the difficulties of obtaining and storing the Lulab and Ethrog—Palm-branch and citron—are partly responsible. Happy will be that synagogue which shall be the first to take steps to provide for every worshipper "the fruit of goodly trees, branches of palm-trees, the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook." Nowadays to bear a Palm-branch in a West-end synagogue is so rare an act that one must have much courage or much conceit to join the meagre

band of the faithful processionists. Yet the custom is so beautiful, so rich in spiritual meaning, that if only more of modern Israel's valiant men would respond to the signal, those of us who now hold aloof might keep one another in countenance. Let more of the stalwarts lead, and some of us weaklings may pluck up the courage to follow, to go in joy and reverence together round all that remains to us of Zion, round the Law which has gone forth from it.

IV

THE BOOK OF LIFE

"Remember us unto life, O King, who delightest in life, and inscribe us in the Book of Life, for Thine own sake, O living God."

This prayer, inserted in the daily service from the New Year till the great fast—from the first to the tenth of Tishri—is of uncertain age. Unmentioned in the Talmud, it meets us for the first time in an eighth-century collection of laws. Thus its antiquity is respectable, if not venerable. But the underlying idea is far older, and the metaphor used carries us back to an ancient order of things.

It is plausibly supposed that the "Book of Life" was a spiritual fancy corresponding to a quite material fact. We have several indications that at a fairly early date there was drawn up in Judea a civil list, or register, in which the names of fully qualified citizens were officially entered. Such a practice is attested by statements and allusions in Scripture, and it is probable that the figure of the "Book of Life" was thence derived. To be enrolled in the Book of Life would imply membership of the divine commonwealth; to be blotted out would be to suffer disfranchisement.

From this image the step would be easy to a

book containing a record of man's doings. This phase of the conception is found in the Mishnah. "Know what is above thee—a seeing eye and a hearing ear, and all thy deeds written in a book" (Aboth. ii. 1). These three things—which, as the author of the saying urges, restrain a man from sin—are in essence one, and they convey what is perhaps the leading principle of Judaism as a discipline. Individual responsibility, with the corollary of inevitable retribution; inevitable, that is, unless the wayfarer will divert himself to the road of repentance, prayer, and charity—the path by which the sinner finds a new approach to virtue and life. The moral is enforced in the third chapter of the same collection of "Sayings of the Jewish Fathers," where life is compared to a shop with its open ledger of credit and debit. Here, again, the idea is in germ scriptural. Sin blots man out from the book, virtue sets his name there in indelible ink. Malachi speaks of a book of remembrance, written in his day for those that feared the Lord and thought upon His name. "And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord, in that day when I make up My jewels." Alas! that this is a mistranslation; the Revised Version has ruthlessly deprived us of the jewels, and we must bid farewell to the beautiful phrase which in the Authorised Version ends the sentence of Malachi just cited. But the idea is clear enough. In the day of judgment—in the day wherein God will make a peculiar treasure—He will account as *His* the children who have served their Father,

and whose names are inscribed in the book of remembrance. And, on the other hand, just as some things are written in the Book for man's advantage, so are others entered to his disadvantage. "Behold, it is written before Me: I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom, your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together, saith the Lord" (Isaiah lxv. 6–7). Between these two extremes, between good marks for virtue and bad marks for vice, stand entries which cry aloud, not for marks at all, but for mercy. In the 56th Psalm, whose author has been termed "the mouthpiece of oppressed and suffering Israel," the tears of the trusting yet ill-faring people are put into God's bottle. "By a bold figure God is said to collect and treasure Israel's tears, as though they were precious wine. Kay quotes St. Bernard's saying 'Lacrimae poenitentium vinum angelorum'" (Kirkpatrick). "Are not my wanderings, my tears, in Thy book?" continues the Psalmist. The thought is as tender as it is solacing. It is even finer than Lawrence Sterne's ever-memorable phrase. Lawrence Sterne's accusing angel blushes as he hands in a frail man's slip; the recording angel blots it out with a tear. The Psalmist would have man's frailties, his weaknesses, his sorrows, his tears, entered in the Book of Life, as his most eloquent advocates for the pity of the Judge.

Dr. Kohler says: "The origin of the heavenly Book of Life must be sought in Babylonia, whereas the annual Judgment Day seems to have been

adopted by the Jews under Babylonian influence in post-exilic times." Be that as it may, the idea became completely Judaised, and was turned to splendid moral account. Some modern Jews are apt to feel a natural but unjustifiable repugnance to the notion of an annual balancing of the Book of Life. Certainly, the notion is sometimes presented crudely in the liturgy of the New Year and the Day of Atonement. Written in the Book of Life on the New Year, the entry is sealed on the Day of Atonement. In even more detail, a well-known *piyut*, or liturgical poem, for the New Year reproduced the old Rabbinical notion of the three books: one for the thoroughly righteous, one for the thoroughly wicked, and one for the intermediate class who, neither righteous nor wicked overmuch, can exchange hell for heaven by the blessed trilogy of repentance and prayer and charity. All this, if too mechanically expressed, is likely to be injurious. But when the Rabbis, with Abbahu in the Talmud, represented God as seated at the New Year on the throne of judgment, with the books of the living and the books of the dead open before Him, all that they meant was to impart a stronger sense of gravity and a more than usual seriousness to the thoughts of men during the ten penitential days. Were they untrue to human nature in so doing? They understood better than we moderns that there is a time for everything; that man's conscience cannot bear the strain of continuous high pressure; that it is well for him to appoint a season for self-communion, a season

when he can live morally and spiritually on a higher plane. "The Rabbis were far from confining the need or utility of repentance to the penitential season from New Year to the Day of Atonement. Very common with them is the saying, 'Repent one day before thy death.' When his disciples said to R. Eleazar, 'Does then a man know when he will die?' he answered, 'The more necessary that he should repent to-day; then, if he die to-morrow, all his days will have been passed in penitence, as it says: Let thy garments be always white (Eccles. ix. 8)'" (Montefiore). The annual stock-taking of a business man does not imply that he is a careless trader during the rest of the year. And the metaphor holds in the spiritual world also.

"Temporal life is apparently prayed for in the liturgical formula: Inscribe us in the Book of Life." No doubt one form of the prayer is, as Prof. Margolis says, for temporal life and prosperity. It is a modern weakness on the part of Jews to feel it necessary to apologise for such prayers. Life, earthly and material, is a good thing; prosperity is worth praying for. Judaism could glance at the paradox: "How shall a man die? Let him live. How shall a man live? Let him die." But while accepting the Talmudic paradox as a beautiful expression of the supremacy of the inner over the outer, of spirit over matter, the eternal over the mortal, Judaism did not underrate the value of earthly life because it esteemed more highly the worth of life everlasting. Long life on earth was

a blessing, and the Jewish mind did not lose hold of this healthy fact under the fascination of the belief that the less of earth the more of heaven, the shorter life the longer immortality. And yet it did, it must, regard the blessing of life rather as a means than an end. A short life might be full of living; for, as the Rabbi said, some men can qualify themselves for eternity in an hour. A long life was, on the other hand, a fuller preparation, a fuller opportunity. "Rabbi Jacob said, This world is like a vestibule before the world to come; prepare thyself in the vestibule, that thou mayest enter into the hall."

And so in certain passages of Scripture and the Apocalypses the "Book of Life" transcends earthly existence and identifies itself with the spiritual life with God. The liturgy of the New Year also reproduces this enlarged, spiritualised conception. Another *piyut* runs: "For life eternal may the faithful ones be written, may they behold the pleasantness of the Lord, and find remembrance in His heavenly Temple."

There is nothing childish or mechanical in such hopes. It is an aspiration for the highest happiness: a happy life on earth, a still happier hereafter; here effort, there attainment; the life of man unified, harmonised, in all its parts; the finite transfigured by its absorption into the infinite.

V

THE ABODAH

THERE stands out a clear historical fact which, more than any mere theory, reveals the spirituality of Judaism. The biblical scheme of atonement for sin was dependent upon the sacrificial system. Atonement was, in the developed religion of Israel, an inward process; but in the Bible this inward process was closely allied to an outward sacrificial ceremonial. The outward ceremonial disappeared with the Temple, yet the inward process not only remained intact, it was so expanded as to occupy the whole field of which it had previously filled only a part. No other religion has ever been so severely tried; no other religion has been called upon to substitute prayer for sacrifice. Prayer, it is true, has taken the place of sacrifice in other religions; Judaism alone has been faced by the problem how, beginning with sacrifice, to end with prayer. "We will offer instead of bulls, the words of our mouth" (Hosea xiv. 2)—these words are the constant text on which the Jewish liturgy of the Day of Atonement dwells. And this insistence represents at once the triumph of the sacrificial system and the vindication of

spiritual Judaism—the triumph of the sacrificial system inasmuch as its deeply beneficial influence enabled Judaism to do without it, the vindication inasmuch as Judaism, put to the test, came through it not merely unscathed but purified and ennobled.

Simon the Just used to say: "Upon three things the world is based: upon the Torah, the Abodah, and Charity." The Torah is not merely the Law (Pentateuch), it is the whole body of revealed truth and doctrine; the Abodah, as the word would be used by a High Priest such as the speaker was, means the service and sacrifices of the Temple, which was then, of course, still standing; Charity, in the Hebrew phrase employed, expresses loving-kindness, humanity, brotherly regard, practical and sympathetic. Thus in one of the oldest passages of the Mishnah, going back to the third century B.C., we already find the Abodah, or sacrificial system, associated on the one side with love of God and on the other with love of man. The authors of some of the most spiritual of the Psalms were Temple singers, men who loved the sacrificial ritual and were not only able to weld that love into an intensely inward religion, but even composed for use during the offering of the sacrifices these Psalms which the world has ever since accepted as the most potent means of bringing man's soul into communion with God.

Is it so difficult for us to understand this alliance of the outward with the inward? If it

is, the reason can only be that we have lost something of our Judaism. But, in actual fact, we do not experience the difficulty suggested. Contrast, for instance, the Hebrew word *teshubah* (Return) with its imperfect English equivalent *repentance* (Regret). Regret or contrition is an essential element in atonement; but Return (amendment) is an equally essential element. An inward feeling of contrition, translating itself into an outward fact of amendment—the two being bound together by the tender love and pity of God who stretches forth His hand to the contrite and helps him, expects him, to turn from his evil ways and live. Mere acts of practical reparation, without the underlying sense that sin estranges man from God, may be a poor atonement, but a sense of sin unaccompanied by practical reparation is still poorer.

So we can perceive in the Abodah of the Day of Atonement the same union of ideas. As described in the Mishnah, the Abodah was at once a ritual of hand and heart. The sacrifices were elaborate, but not more so than the confessions. Adorned with all the art that olden Israel knew, the Abodah must have been a magnificent spectacle, moving and impressive. It was ritualism at its highest. The bulls and the goats, the incense and the oblations, the ablutions and the sprinklings—these stand out in the Abodah of the Day of Atonement. But equally impressive is the threefold confession solemnly pronounced by the High Priest—the confession of sin on

behalf of himself, the Priestly order, and the whole house of Israel. "He laid his two hands upon the goat and confessed, speaking thus: 'O God, Thy people, the house of Israel, have sinned, worked iniquity and transgressed against Thee; I beseech Thee by Thine ineffable Name to pardon the sins, iniquities, and transgressions which Thy people, the House of Israel, have committed against Thee, as is written in the Law of Moses Thy servant, For on this day shall he make an atonement for you, to cleanse you from all your sins before the Lord.'"

There is no need to elaborate the scene. The Mishnah in its simple, effective style pictures it to us inimitably. "And the priests and the people who stood in the Fore-court, when they heard the ineffable Name coming forth from the mouth of the High Priest in holiness and purity, knelt down, prostrated themselves and fell upon their faces, saying, 'Blessed be the Name whose glorious kingdom is for ever and ever.' And he was careful to finish the pronunciation of the Name while they were reciting this response; and he then said unto them, 'Ye shall be clean,'" completing the text (Leviticus xvi. 30), which had been interrupted at the pronunciation of the Name by the reverential response of priests and people.

The scene reproduces itself in part in the modern synagogue. In part only, for much of it is a mere memory. Never, however, was memory more inspiring, more exquisitely utilised. The very word Abodah, which once meant the Temple service itself,

now means the Synagogue ritual in which that service is affectionately and touchingly described. Step by step, the Synagogue Abodah follows the Temple Abodah, and though the sacrifices are absent and the "ineffable Name" is no longer pronounced, yet the solemnity remains and is marked by the prostration of the whole congregation—rare indeed in the synagogue. Prostration is not universal on the Day of Atonement; it seems to have been early abandoned in Palestine and retained only in Babylon. At all events, the practice in modern times varies. The solemnity of the Abodah is absolutely independent of the practice, for here again Judaism does not depend upon specific ceremonies, even though it employs ceremony so largely and so successfully.

There is one great change, however. In olden times the Temple Abodah ended in a cheerful note. The people, aglow with spiritual joy, had sought pardon and humbly believed that it had attained it. Hence a pæan of glad thanksgiving, a glorious eulogy of the High Priest in the beauty of his holiness, concluded the ceremonial. The Synagogue has retained the pæan, but allows it to fade away into a sadderchime. For, after all, the olden scene has been described, not witnessed. Memory with the Jew always has a bitter taste; it reminds him of a lost happiness. We hear but do not see.

> "Happy he that day who saw
> How, with reverence and awe
> And with sanctity of mien,
> Spoke the Priest: 'Ye shall be clean

From your sins before the Lord';
Echoed long the holy word,
While around the fragrant incense stole.
Happy he whose eyes
Saw at last the cloud of glory rise,
But to hear of it afflicts our soul."

There is genuine pathos in this note of the medieval poet, Solomon Ibn Gebriol. But though we feel the pathos, we must not yield to it. Just as the Temple Abodah of the past has given place to the Synagogue Abodah of the present, just as the olden sacrifices have been transformed and transfigured into our modern prayers—these like those, and even more than those, a heart worship—so while we realise what we have lost, we must not omit to realise what we have gained; the future is with us as well as the past. And thus the gifted translator (Alice Lucas), from whom Ibn Gebriol's just cited verse has been taken, ends off the song:—

"Ever thus the burden rang
Of the pious songs, that sang
All the glories past and gone
Israel once did gaze upon,—
Glories of the sacred fane,
Which they mourned and mourned again,
With a bitterness beyond control.
Happy he whose eyes
Saw (they said) the cloud of glory rise,
But to hear of it afflicts our soul.

Singers of a bygone day
Who from earth have passed away,
Now ye see the glories shine
Of that distant land divine,

And no more (entranced by them)
Mourn this world's Jerusalem.
Happy ye who, from that heavenly goal,
See, with other eyes
Far than ours, such radiant visions rise,
That to hear of them delights our soul."

Thus is rebuilt on the reverent memories of the past the not less reverent dreams of the future. Can we realise such dreams? Abodah in various forms has its day and passes; but while *service* (for that is the literal meaning of Abodah) remains, the servant need not despair of the nearness and love of the Master. Service atones; on service the world stands.

VI

PURIM PARODIES

THERE is but one step from the sublime to the ridiculous. As Scott remarks, and as psychologists confirm, the inclination to laugh is the most uncontrollable when the solemnity of time and occasion renders laughter peculiarly improper. Making sport of sacred things is by no means identical with what in modern times we call irreverence. This type of humorist is less scoffer than lover; his laughter arises rather from an excess of reverence than from a defect in it. Nowadays men dare not parody sacred things. Not only they do not, they dare not; in former ages men not only dared, they did it. We have to be very careful in our demeanour towards a stranger to whom we pay an occasional visit of ceremony; we must put on company manners, and avoid behaviour arguing familiarity. With a dear and intimate friend we can act otherwise. An intimate friend knows that we respect him, and we may relax into momentary disrespect without sacrificing our friendship. In fact, if he is constantly in our thoughts, so constantly indeed that we have few thoughts which are not of him or about him, how can we seek the

relaxation of ridicule except by making sport of him?—a sport that soon finds its level, and makes way for renewed tokens of regard.

The same considerations apply, with due modification, to the case of religious observances. The more men's minds are full of their faith, the more inclined they are to poke fun at it. The mirth is harmless and transitory, the faith deep-seated and permanent. Men must laugh, and they laugh at what interests them most. In the pre-Protestant age, the monks themselves connived at the buffooneries of the Lord Abbots of Misrule, Boy Bishops, Presidents of Fools, or whatever else the mock representatives of the highest ecclesiastics were called. True, these saturnalia belong to an old-world order of spring customs which go back to ancient Babylonia and beyond it. But our interest in the survival of such customs in the Middle Ages is psychological rather than historical. Readers of Sir Walter Scott's "Abbot," or of Mr. Frazer's "Golden Bough," must be acquainted with the length to which these medieval saturnalia were carried: the disrespect to authority which authority itself enjoyed for the nonce, what seems to us the blasphemy, the scurrilous imitations even of church hymns, the caricatures of the most sacred rites—conduct so shocking to our sense of decency, mainly, it is to be supposed, because our faith also has become a matter of mere respectability, of what Tom Brown called "kid-glove go-to-meeting etiquette," which cannot relax itself without coming

entirely to pieces. Jews have needed their carnivals also. They, too, on mirthful occasions, have been known to appoint sham and not over soft-mouthed individuals as pseudo-Rabbis, in whom was vested the inalienable right of laughing at sacred things, caricaturing the prayer-book, and, to them most enjoyable prank of all, ridiculing the real Rabbi, imitating his tricks of speech and manner and gait, reproducing his pet weaknesses, and altogether taking it out of him for the respect so cordially shown at other times.

Carnival merry-makings have held a conspicuous place in all religious systems, for laughter is not after all blasphemy, nor is burlesque deadly sin. David before the Ark, staid and venerable Rabbis at the Ceremony of the Water-drawing during the feast of Tabernacles, did not hesitate to fall in with popular sentiment. On the Rejoicing of the Law at the present day, many synagogues in Russia and even in England—synagogues, of course, of the old-fashioned type—are the scenes of uproarious merriment, harmless yet noisy. It must be remembered that Jews are only now beginning to differentiate severely between the sacred and the secular. In the Middle Ages such a distinction was impossible; it would certainly have been unintelligible if made. Life in all its parts was equally holy, equally profane. The Jew, therefore, never hesitated to bring the world into the synagogue; and are we so sure that he was wrong and we right? If he took the world more into the synagogue than we, he also carried the

synagogue more often into the world. Be that as it may, Judaism had its carnivals, chief among them Purim. It is not intended to describe here all the forms of masking and mumming in which overpent emotions found expression. Attention will be limited to literary parodies, though to do justice to so curious a theme would need far more space than can well be afforded.

Systematic scientific treatment seems out of place; but those who cannot relax their critical severity even on Purim may find in Steinschneider's bibliography enough to satisfy the most ravenous thirst. We must be content with sipping the sparkling cup; stronger heads are needed to drain it to the dregs.

The Purim parodies may be classed roughly under two heads; those which caricature the Rabbinical style of argument and those which parody the prayers. The former are extremely funny; the latter are clever, but too little to our present taste to make much quotation desirable. Thus we have imitations of the Hallel (Psalms cxiii–cxviii) in praise of wine, beginning appropriately, but indecorously, *Hallelujayin*, "Praise ye Wine." ("From the rising of the sun unto the setting thereof we will praise it in our mouths."). Even the *Nishmath* prayer is converted into an anacreontic ode with scarcely the change of a word. The *Selichoth*, or propitiatory prayers, are likewise drawn upon to add to the store of amusement; so changed is our feeling in the matter that we cannot tolerate quotation of specimens.

More legitimate and amusing are the parodies of the Talmudic method; the caricatures are absurd enough, but they are at least as funny as they are foolish. Only those who have some knowledge of the Rabbinic style of reasoning can fully appreciate the merits of these parodies, but the following passages in imitation of the Passover Haggadah speak for themselves: "Whoever has not done these three things on Purim has not done his duty—and these are they, Eating, Drinking, and Dancing." . . . "Everyone who is thirsty, let him come in and drink." "In what differs this day from all other days? On other days you *may* drink, on this day you *must*." . . . "He who drinks oftenest and deepest is most to be praised." . . . "It happened once with Rabbi Old Wine and his associates that they ate and drank at the Purim feast all day and night, until they all fell under the table with their cups in their hands. On the morrow, their disciples found them in this condition and said, 'Our masters, the time for the morning meal has arrived.'" So the parody follows the service line by line, with witty flashes and amazingly clever burlesque. Take the following: "R. Cask said, for seventy years I have rejoiced on Purim, but I was never in a position to prove that the feasting should last for three days and three nights until R. Old Wine taught: It is written 'from grief to joy and from mourning to holiday' (Esther ix. 22); now, just as the grief and fasting lasted for three days, so the joy and merry-making must last for three days.

R. Pitcher said seven days, for the days of mourning (for the dead) continue for seven days. The wise men say nothing, but eat and drink until the Messiah comes." The Passover service concludes, "Next year we hope to be in Jerusalem;" the parody, with very slight alteration of the Hebrew, closes with the aspiration, "Next year we hope to drink double."

These specimens must suffice. Just as the Passover service is the Seder for *lel shimmurim* (Night of Watching), the parody is termed the Seder for *lel shiccurim* ("Order of Service for the Night of Drunkenness"). Besides these parodies of the Seder there are imitations of the Mishnah described as Tractate Purim. "On the eve of the 14th Nisan, we must remove all *leaven* from our houses"—so runs the opening passage of the Mishnah Pesachim. "On the eve of the 14th Adar we must remove all *water* from our houses," is the version of the parodist. It is a prime sin to drink water on Purim. If it rains it is an omen of evil to the world, but woe betide the unfortunate Israelite who fails to shut his windows to exclude the untimely showers. One other quotation from the comic Mishnah must end our selection. In the Book of Proverbs (xxxi. 6) occurs the text, "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish," but the word translated "ready to perish" may also be rendered "to him that is losing." Several Rabbis, in the parody, were sitting over their wine and indulging in a game of dice for the whole night long, until their

disciples came and said: "Venerable masters! the time has come for you to perform your Purim duties and to drink the apportioned quantity of wine." One of the company did not partake, because he was downcast at the loss of his money which had occurred during the play. Thereupon one of his friends remarked that when *he* lost money on Purim he only drank the deeper, because it is written, "Give strong drink to the man who is losing."

A word of warning is perhaps necessary. It may be hastily inferred from the passages given above, as well as from others perforce omitted, that medieval Jews were intemperate and their Rabbis *bon-vivants*. No inference could be more false or ludicrous. The whole point of the caricature is that it is addressed to temperate men, and the fun derives from the ascription of rollicking winebibbing to men who taught, both by precept and example, the lesson, not of total abstinence, but of moderation and temperance in its true sense.

Of the writers of the parodies, some were learned, more of them witty, most of them reverential. We cannot altogether justify them; all carnivals tend to excess. Why, then, has it been thought necessary to describe these parodies, to quote some few extracts from them, and to include them in this series of Festival Studies? Because, without reference to them a whole aspect of the Jewish character would be missed, and an incomplete picture presented. For these parodies are in no

sense vulgar or coarse. There is not a word in them for which we need blush, though much in them surprises and offends our taste. They show us the Jew so absorbed in Judaism that his wit assumes the shape of imitation, that supreme form of flattery. He imitates what he knows and likes best when he wishes to amuse himself and be happy. Whether at the bottom of it all there lies a deep-seated critical attitude, a lack of *intellectual* reverence, is a possible question to raise. What is certain is that there was no *religious* irreverence; at most it was the disrespect of familiarity, a disrespect which is not easily distinguishable from warm affection. If we are less able to see this, it may be because, as Brutus said to Lucilius ("Julius Cæsar," iv. 2):—

> "When love begins to sicken and decay,
> It useth an enforced ceremony;
> There are no tricks in plain and simple faith."

It may even be that our present ceremoniousness is nearer to irreverence than was the easy familiarity of the past. But I am explaining not justifying. I would not wish the old unceremoniousness back.

VII

ART ON THE SEDER-TABLE

The barest Seder-table is beautiful on the Passover eve; it may be poor, but it cannot be mean. Beauty is inherent in the Seder service, and though the charm may be homely, its homeliness is necessarily graceful. But it is nevertheless strange and regrettable that we no longer add to the spiritual charm of the Seder an artistic beauty also. The fact is strange and regrettable. Strange, because the tendency of modern fashion is to improve and elaborate the table appointments used at everyday meals. Regrettable, because we can never develop a Jewish decorative art unless there is regenerated a wide demand for objects of beauty, designed for such occasions of domestic religion as the Seder night.

Of old, Jewish taste was seen at its best on the Passover eve. Not only was this taste shown in the making of artistic things, but also in their selection. There have come down to us many beautiful relics which were not made by Jews, but the selection and treasuring of these beautiful things by Jews afford collateral evidence that our medieval brethren often had true artistic

feeling. And a good many of the objects were actually the work of Jewish hands.

In the first centuries, Jews followed the Græco-Roman fashion of freemen, reclining on couches at their more important meals. Hence the use in more recent times of cushions for, at least, the "master of the house," on the Passover eve —the festival of freedom. In the Benguiat collection, now in the National Museum, Washington, there are two such cushions, made in Samacor (Bulgaria) in the sixteenth century. The material, as described by Drs. C. Adler and J. M. Casanowicz, is green silk, which is richly embroidered in gold. It may be pointed out that in the designs of these objects there is nothing specifically Paschal. It often happened that beautiful things were reserved and appropriated for certain specific occasions, and only thus became closely associated with those occasions. The medieval Jew acquired some beautiful brocade or embroidery, and set it aside for the Seder night. A similar remark applies to the ewer and basin of brass repoussé and chased work assigned in the Benguiat collection for Seder use. Some of the table-covers, the table-centres, the covers for unleavened cakes and bitter herbs, found in various collections, belong to the same category; but others were distinctly made for Passover. Some of these table-centres (especially those of German provenance) are adorned with scenes from the story of the Exodus or from the ceremonies of the Seder. On some, again, the Festival Sancti-

fication (*Kiddush*) is inscribed. Specific covers for the cakes and herbs are found chiefly in Germany and the Levant. They are of different materials, linen and silk being naturally chosen. The Benguiat collection contains a very fine specimen. It is of purple-coloured silk, embroidered in silver and gold, and was made in Chios (Asia Minor) in the eighteenth century. It measures twenty-one by nineteen inches, and was used as a cover for the bitter herbs. In South Germany we find many towel-shaped covers for the unleavened cakes; emblems from Adam and Eve down to the building of the Temple are figured thereon. An interesting inscription on some of these is the name of the Jewess who worked the embroidery. The only Seder-cover shown at the Anglo-Jewish Exhibition was of German origin.

More popular were the Seder dishes. Of these many fine examples are extant in public and private collections. They were made everywhere, and of all materials—glass, china, majolica, silver and gold, pewter. The Hamburg Museum possesses one of Persian style (date, 1776). Round the outer margin is inscribed the rhymed summary of the Seder service; on the inside margin are, in Hebrew, the words: "He who relates much concerning the Exodus is praiseworthy." One pictured by Dr. Frauberger is probably Dutch. It is made of pewter, richly inlaid with silver chasings and borders. Here, again, we find the rhymed summary, but much more. The "four sons" of the

Seder are pictured, and on the margin are a series of grotesques partly derived from the *Chad Gadya*. Another, which belonged to Mr. F. D. Mocatta (pictured by Mr. F. Haes), is of faïence work, and contains the Kiddush and the rhymed summary with vignettes. Yet another fine specimen (containing the same inscriptions as last described and also four vignettes of scenes in the Seder service) is preserved at Washington. It was "made by Jews of Spain in the thirteenth century, and glazed in Italy in the sixteenth century."

Special mention must be made of a Passover dish exhibited at the Albert Hall by Madame Hartog (Cat. No. 1602). The dish was engraved by the donor, who presented it as a wedding gift to the exhibitor's grandmother, 120 years before 1887, the date of the Albert Hall Exhibition. In an illuminated Haggadah (service for the Passover eve) in the British Museum (Add. 27,210) an inscription shows that this was also a wedding gift. Jewish art would be much encouraged were such presents more usual nowadays. An allusion has just been made to the illuminated Haggadahs, which constitute so important an element in the art of the Seder-table. From the rough pen-and-ink sketches found in Geniza fragments of the Haggadah at Cambridge, down to the latest quaint woodcuts of cheap modern editions, the Seder service has been pictorially embellished throughout the ages. As early as 1526 (Prague) we have printed editions containing woodcuts. Long be-

fore and long after that date illuminated manuscripts of the Haggadah abound, the finest being the Crawford MS. (still awaiting publication from Mr. F. Haes's magnificent photographs) and the Haggadah of Sarajevo (edited with many fine illustrations by Müller, Schlosser, and Kaufmann, Vienna 1898). The last-named work may be commended to those who are in search of an elegant and appropriate wedding-gift. Some good specimens of Haggadah illustration will be found in the Jewish Encyclopedia, vol. vi., pp. 143 onwards. The frontispiece of that volume is derived from the Sarajevo Haggadah, which latter (like the Crawford) is, I am strongly convinced, of French origin.

Some of the other artistic ornaments of the Seder-table have still to be noted. Dishes and bowls for holding the bitter herbs are fairly common. One in the Benguiat collection is of chased brass-work, made in Venice in the fifteenth century. Another (Frauberger) is a splendid bowl with four feet, elaborately chased. One exhibited at the Albert Hall is made of Jerusalem (black Moabite) stone. "This stone," as we are reminded in J. Jacobs and L. Wolf's Catalogue of the Anglo-Jewish Exhibition, "is black during the day, grey at night, and changes to blue with red spots during summer." A rarer object is the *Charoseth* wheel-barrow, with tongs, a form which seems restricted to Italy. Enamelled saucers with silver spoons, are oftener found. Antique china cups for the salt-water, small silver stands

for the roasted eggs, are, naturally, not infrequent. Quite uncommon is a special glass and plate for counting off the ten plagues from the wine cup. The specimen in the Washington Museum is extremely beautiful and might be copied with advantage.

The art of the Seder-table perhaps attains its best in the wine cups. In the Benguiat collection are a set of twelve wine glasses to be used by the participants in the Passover service. They are of cut glass with gilded rims, and are engraved with scenes from human life; one represents a woman at the loom, another a sailing vessel, others a rural idyll, a harvesting scene, a country homestead, a landscape, a chariot race, a house with its inhabitants, a hunting scene. (Hunting scenes are a popular illustration in the illuminated Haggadahs). This set was made in the seventeenth century; the height of each glass is $4\frac{1}{4}$ inches, diameter $1\frac{7}{8}$ inches. Many Jewish families reserve some of their glass and china solely for Passover use, but such a brilliant set as this could scarcely be matched. Of the metal wine cups it is unnecessary to speak. Beautiful specimens abound in all metals and all shapes, circular, hexagonal, mug-shaped with covers, and so forth. The chasing and designs are often elaborate. Allusion may be made to two rarities. The cup of Elijah is sometimes made double, one within the other. The motive for this, I fancy, must be that the Elijah cup was designed for a twofold purpose: (*a*) it is for Elijah, expected on the

Passover eve; (*b*) it is for any unexpected guest. Hence the cup may have been made double to allow that, in emergency (*b*), purpose (*a*) might still be provided for. Another curiosity may be seen in the Kunstgewerbe Museum, Düsseldorf. This cup has four sets of notches on the margin: one notch, two notches, three notches, four notches. Evidently the celebrant of the Seder was expected to turn the cup after each use of it, and the notches enabled him to keep record of the "four cups," of which he (like all present) had to partake. Finally, an artistic object often found on the Seder-table is the illuminated Omer-Book. "Counting the Omer" (Leviticus xxiii. 15) begins on the second night of the Passover, and, as the counting is often done at the Seder, such beautifully ornamented little scrolls appeared in some medieval homes on the Passover.

What is the moral of it all? The olden Jews understood better than we do two important things. First, sameness means loss of interest. They reserved specific objects of beauty and utility for specific occasions, and thus heightened the interest which those occasions aroused as they came round in annual course. Secondly, they realised that to honour God one must sometimes spend one's substance. Social festivities need not, should not, absorb all our means. Our home religion cries aloud for its share. True it is that warm-hearted religion is quite consistent with a simple, unadorned Seder-table. But what is not consistent is that we

should reserve *all* our simple unadornment for the Seder-table.

> "Honour the Lord with thy substance,
> And with the first fruits of thine increase."
> (Proverbs iii. 9.)

Each Jew, according to the gift of his hand, should beautify the table whereat he recites with recurrent joy the moving story of God's love for our fathers and for us.

VIII

A UNIQUE HAGGADAH PICTURE

One of the pictures in the richly illuminated Haggadah of Sarajevo gives a real shock to Jewish susceptibilities. In what Prof. Kaufmann regarded as the "German" type of Haggadah illustrations, the historical pictures begin with the patriarch Abraham. This is a natural starting-point. The whole story of the servitude in Eygpt and the consequent rescue depends, in the Bible, on the covenant between God and Abraham.

But in the Sarajevo Haggadah, which shows "Spanish" influence, the historical series starts earlier. The first two folios represent scenes from the biblical narrative of the creation. The explanation of this retrogression in time has been easily found. The Haggadah opens with the Festival Sanctification (*Kiddush*), and naturally the Sabbath form of the sanctification is also included. Now, the initial paragraph of the Kiddush is a literal quotation from Genesis i. 31–ii. 3: "The Sixth Day; thus the heavens and earth were finished and all their host," and so forth. This passage might well offer a direct suggestion to an artist to depict the stages of the six days' creation, culminating in the Sabbath Day of Rest.

The artist has distributed the events of seven days into eight scenes, arranged in two sets of four each. The first depicts chaos; the Spirit of God hovers as a golden flame, rising from out primeval waters. Second comes the separation between light and darkness. Under a round arch, the space is divided into two halves by a vertical line, to the left of which a deep black patch indicates the darkness, while to the right a far paler patch represents the light. In the third picture (Second Day) the separation between the waters is portrayed; from the sky there stream downwards bright rays, emblematic, doubtless, of the Divine influence. The fourth picture (concluding the first folio, and representing the work of the Third Day) repeats, as do the sixth and seventh pictures, these streaming rays which descend from above in the shape of a spreading cone. In this fourth picture, we are shown the separation of water from land, the earth bristling with trees and shrubs. Fifthly, we have the work of the Fourth Day; the sun and moon and stars appear above the picture proper, and are repeated in the sixth picture (Fifth Day). Birds are at the top of the round globe, fish at the bottom, while between are the wild beasts amid which a lion occupies a prominent place. The seventh picture (Sixth Day) repeats several of the previous details, but adds the creation of man, a somewhat dwarfed figure. Finally, in an eighth picture, appears a unique illustration—altogether unparalleled, so far as I know, in Jewish manuscripts, though Dr. R. Gottheil has recently

suggested a parallel. In the picture to which I refer we see a human figure, young and beardless, clothed in an ample robe, hooded and red. The figure is seated in repose under a trefoil canopy—and this figure is apparently meant to represent God. The editors of the Sarajevo Haggadah feel no doubt whatever that such is the artist's intention.

If so, the picture is unique, or at all events a great rarity, and proves conclusively one of two things: (*a*) The artist was a Christian, or, more probably, (*b*) the artist was a Jew copying slavishly a Christian model, the un-Jewish character of which was, for some reason, not perceived by him. It cannot be argued, as Prof. D. H. Müller seems to argue, that the picture is quite un-Christian in origin because God, in Christian art, appears as an old, bearded man. For though this is true of developed Christian art, as we are now most familiar with it, it is not true of the more primitive Christian types. In the earliest Christian art, as seen in the Roman catacombs, no attempt was made to represent God in full human shape. He appears as a hand holding out to Moses the two Tables of Stone. This—as a mere figure of speech—may be found also in the Midrash. It is reproduced in a popular, but regrettable, poem still recited in many synagogues on Simchath Torah. It was not till the age of Charlemagne that Christian artists became profuse in their pictures of God as a full human figure. The artists adopted two opposite plans. To express

the Divine unchangeableness, they showed God either as a beardless youth—perennially young; or as an old man, with virile strength and unimpaired vigour. "They" (the scriptural writers), "saw in Thee both age and youth, Thy hair now grey, now black." So runs a famous line in the Hebrew "Hymn of Glory." The whole hymn is built up of sensuous images, to which a mystic turn is given. The "Hymn of Glory" is a fine poem, and the author guards against all possible misapprehension by the emphatic caution: "They figured Thee in a multitude of visions, yet behold Thou art One under all images." Still, marvellously powerful as the "Hymn of Glory" is, it is impossible, from a Jewish standpoint, not to prefer the "Hymn of Unity" for the third day of the week, with its uncompromising, completely Jewish protest: "On Thee there falls nor age nor youth; nor grey hairs nor black tresses." It is unnecessary to trace the further development of the pictorial representation of God in later Christian art. Briefly put, the history was this: In the fifteenth century pictures of God as a bearded old man, finally replace the beardless, youthful types. The figures usually wear the triple Papal crown—a quaint detail! Italy, in the Renaissance era, shows us every phase of the æsthetic struggle. We see the symbolical hand, we see the three persons of the Trinity as figures of equal age. God the Father often, again, assumes a small form hidden behind clouds; sometimes the figure is painted off the main picture to imply distance. Then

COLUMBIA BIBLE COLLEGE LIBRARY
Columbia, S. C. 1887

we reach Michelangelo's noble works. The awe, the majesty of deity, are expressed in a muscular, large-limbed, giant stature; a wildly-flowing beard conveys the impression of cosmic movement. Raphael, Titian, and, above all, Albrecht Dürer, developed and modified Michelangelo's ideals, excelling him in serenity, but never in sublimity.

Summing up the influence of these vain, if beautiful, attempts to make the invisible visible, to compress into finite bounds the infinite, incorporeal Spirit—can it be doubted that Judaism has been the better, the purer, without such futilities? To picture God as man lowers both. On the one hand, man cannot hope to perfect in himself the manly type if God and not man is the perfection of that type. On the other hand, God loses all that makes Him God, if He is after all representable as perfect man. "God is not man," then let art and poetry beware of suggesting such a false identification. It is not the least of our many obligations to Maimonides that he so unswervingly re-inforced in the Middle Ages the prophetic conception of God as a pure Spirit. The anthropomorphic language of Scripture and Midrash were, once for all, allegorised away for us by the Sage of Cairo.

Hence, it is so strange, so intolerable, to find in the Sarajevo Haggadah the picture which is the subject of these lines. In Jewish illuminated manuscripts, as a rule, God is altogether omitted by the artist. Perilously near to the sensuousness of the Sarajevo artist is, at first sight, the work of

another illuminator of the Haggadah, described by M. Schwab. In this manuscript an "outstretched arm" is depicted. The hand firmly clasps a sword. M. Schwab apparently cites Exodus vi. 7 in explanation, but the artist cannot have meant to show us God's arm. It is an angel's arm that he has drawn, for in one of the three repetitions of this picture, in the same Haggadah, the sworded arm is clearly held over a representation of the city of Jerusalem, and the reference must be, not to Exodus, but to I. Chronicles xxi. 16. In the Sarajevo Haggadah itself, the artist everywhere (except in the case of the "Sabbath Rest"), avoids any representation of God. In Abraham's offering we see a hand in the sky, but, though in Christian art, until the eleventh century, the hand typified God, the intention, probably, is here to show us the hand of the angel who intervenes in Genesis xxii. In the burning bush we see merely angelic wings, shimmering with gold, while death is inflicted on the first-born of Egypt by a supernatural influence represented by rays. In the Revelation on Mount Sinai, Moses is the main figure, and we see nothing in the heavens but a horn, which projects from the clouds. All these features of the Sarajevo Haggadah strengthen the view that only in the Creation series—a series quite unusual in Jewish MSS.—a direct Christian model was followed in sheer inadvertence.

In a Dutch MS. of the Haggadah—illuminated in the eighteenth century—we have the only set of illustrations known to me in which the scenes of

the *Chad Gadya* are depicted. God slays death, and the artist shows us a skeleton prone under a vivid flash of forked lightning. In several MSS. the scene of the Sinaitic Revelation is adorned above with the first Hebrew word (*anochi*) of the Decalogue on the concave surface of a semi-circular halo. Comparable with this is the Tetragrammaton in a complete halo (sometimes re-inclosed within a triangle) which frequently occurs in mural Church paintings, and in Christian art generally.

The Jewish record is thus, on the whole, a good one. But we must do more than maintain our record. We must become, in this respect, even more rigid Puritans than we have been in the past. In particular, we must refuse to admit figures of any kind whatsoever into our synagogue decoration, lest our artists be tempted to give first symbolical, and, finally, sensuous hints of the Creator. The danger is not only from the artistic side. At the present moment the atmosphere of religious thought is tainted with all sorts of scientific and philosophical shams, which would persuade us that there are natural and metaphysical justifications for impairing the spirituality of God. It was not easy to arrive at the abstract conception of the Divine spirituality, and to retain the spiritual kinship between God and man while discarding all human attributes from our Father in Heaven. Judaism, alone, among the religions prevalent in Europe, did arrive at this conception, and Judaism must permit no

tampering with its cardinal principles—the unity and spirituality of God. In this respect, at least, Judaism represents the highest ideal attained by religion. Let us see to it that we maintain the ideal in untarnished simplicity. "Ye saw no manner of form when God spake unto you in Horeb" (Deut. iv. 15).

IX

THE SUCCAH OF THE BIBLE

THE Succah of the Bible was simply a rude erection intended for watchmen in gardens and vineyards, for soldiers in war, for cattle, and even as a temporary protection against the sun for workers in the fields. It was of the same type as the little lodge erected by the modern fellaheen in Palestine. Some sticks or tree trunks, arranged mostly as a tripod but sometimes as a square, and covered with an old mat as an awning, constitute, at the present day, frail sleeping apartments for guardians against thieves and jackals.

The Succah of the Hebrews had, however, a roof of branches. Jonah exceptionally used a *kikayon* ("gourd"), really the Egyptian *kiki*. We have full information that, at all events, at the Feast of Tabernacles, the Jews gathered olive branches, pine branches, palms, and myrtles to serve as coverings for their temporary huts. This was done after the exile (Nehemiah viii. 8), and was long continued. In Talmud times vines were used, but only when severed from the growing stems, or straw, which was taken from the wheat and barley granaries. From the vines were still hanging clusters of grapes, and so, too, when other fruit-

trees were utilised, the boughs, though dead, retained their pendent burdens. One can easily understand how these last were procured, but whence did Nehemiah's contemporaries obtain their material? They required a good deal. They set the huts on the roofs of their houses, in the courts, in the precincts of the Temple, and in the open spaces near two of the city gates.

Nehemiah tells us that the people went to the "Mount" for their trees. The Mount was clearly Olivet. But what a falling-off is there! The mountain, which rises gloriously to the east of Jerusalem, is now almost bare of trees. Here and there may be seen a fine old olive, but only at the deeper slope leading to the northernmost height do "the trees spread into anything like a forest." As to the palms, they never can have grown profusely on the Judean hills, which are too cold to nurture this tropical plant. There may have been palms in gardens, but there are no traces of these now. Even Jericho, the "City of Palms," has scarcely a tree which has not been freshly planted within the past generation. There are still, however, a good many palms in the maritime lowlands, and it may be that, at no distant date, Palestinian palms will come from the Jewish colonies in numbers as great as when the medieval Christian pilgrim from the Holy Land was known as a "Palmer." In the valley of Hinnom, according to the Mishnah, there were indeed a few Palm trees called Tsini. To return to the contrast between the Olivet of the past and of to-day, the Mount,

with the two gigantic cedars once crowning its summit, under which the pigeons were sold, its dark olive-yards, its masses of figs and pines and myrtles, must have been a favourite pleasure ground. Figs and myrtles are still fairly abundant, and by the brook Kedron is a fine group of olives, while the so-called Garden of Gethsemane still retains eight very ancient olive trees, their trunks gnarled and their foliage scanty. Though, then, these remains still recall the former beauty of the mountain, though its slopes are green in the spring and offer a pleasing contrast to the stony barrenness of the other hills, yet the present state well illustrates the Jewish legend that the Shechinah (or Divine Glory) when it left the Temple lingered but awhile on the slopes of Olivet, and then flitted away to the wilderness.

"When the Shechinah from that erring throng
Alas! withdrew, yet tarried in the track,
As one who ling'reth on the threshold long
And looketh back.

Then step by step in that reluctant flight
Approached the shadow of the city wall,
And lingered yet upon the mountain height
For hoped recall."

Is there truth, too, in the final hope?—

"Behold Thou comest as the dawn of day!
Shechinah! changeless, to illume the night!
O Thou, who art a lamp upon the way,
Who art a light!"

The Succah, type of God's providence, the restoration of Israel from its fallen estate, restrains

one from the pessimism which the present prospect of Olivet induces. But when the Shechinah returns to Israel, it will be not to a mountain on a local site, but to a world in which, by the combined effort of righteous humanity, every mountain and hill shall be made low, and rough places plain, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it (Isaiah xl. 4).

There is a famous passage in Amos (ix. 11) in which the Succah is the type at once of Israel's loneliness and of God's love. This utterance has puzzled the commentators, but I think that I can explain it from something that I saw in Judea. "In that day," says Amos, "I will raise up the Succah ('tabernacle') of David that is fallen and close up the breaches thereof." Now it does seem that the prophet is mixing his figures. As Professor Driver remarks, Amos first speaks of a Succah, but immediately, by referring to the "breaches" changes the figure to a fortress. But the herdsman of Tekoa may be right after all. In the vineyards, besides the temporary hut (*succah*), was constructed the stone tower (*migdal*), which was very substantial. These towers were preserved from season to season, and were used as storehouses. Of this kind must have been the Succah of Genesareth mentioned in the Talmud, intended for the olive-yards. That it was strongly made is clear from the fact that it was turned to permanent domestic uses. But the point of Amos's metaphor is yet

to be explained. When I was in the vineyard at Moza, near Jerusalem, I was shown a solid building made of stone. It had a domed roof, was very substantial, yet was put together entirely without mortar or cement of any kind. You see everywhere stone huts of this kind, but the one I examined most closely recalled to me the words of Amos. For this large, solid stone hut (which cost 100 francs—a large sum there) had a stone staircase running up the outside. On mounting this, one came to the roof, on which was placed a genuine Succah, an alcove covered with Arabian vines, poor as to fruit, but excellent as to shade. It was wonderful to note how cool this was, how wide the prospect, how admirable a look-out for a watchman by day. At night the lower edifice is curiously warm, and is a fine protection against the heavy dew and frequent cold. I think that Amos had just such a structure in mind when he foretold that God would raise up the fallen tabernacle and close up the breaches thereof. The same kind of structure throws new light on Isaiah iv. 6, as the reader will easily see by turning up the passage. So, too, with the 31st Psalm. God's shining face, like brooding wings, shelters the faithful from the storm of human passions, as in a Succah from the heat, and from the wind and rain as in the more solid stone covert on which it was set.

"Oh, how great is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee.

Which Thou hast wrought for them that put their trust in Thee, before the sons of men.

In the covert of Thy presence shalt Thou hide them from the plottings of man.
Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion (*succah*) from the strife of tongues!"

The "Land" indeed throws light on the "Book."

The story is told in the Talmud of a voyage made by some Rabbis during the week of Tabernacles. One built a Succah aloft in the mast of the vessel, and another laughed. But the scoffer was wrong, for the strength of Judaism lies in its power to rise above circumstance and to transfer to changed sets of conditions the religious emotions originally aroused in altogether different environments. In our time, the Succah is rapidly becoming a mere symbol. Once lived in, the Succah is now mostly an ornament of the synagogue, visited at most once for a brief space. But the change from an abode to an ornament is consistent with our still using the symbol as an expression of the conviction that God's Providence was not for a day but for all time. Jews have lived in towns instead of tents for nearly twenty centuries, yet amid their town-life the Succah may recall them to bygone days when their touch was closer with Nature and Nature's God.

And try to picture the sensations of settlers in the new Jewish agricultural colonies as the Feast of Tabernacles approaches. They are renewing history, a function which Jews all the world over are called upon to fulfil. But these

settlers are in a peculiarly dramatic situation. They have accomplished their new exodus, and strangers under strange skies in Argentina or strangers still in a land once the home of their fathers, they must hereafter perform a pilgrimage towards a beckoning land of promise. In their wilderness they live in booths at the prescribed season of the year, confident that God is with them still, that as His providence sheltered their fathers so will it shelter them now. To us, also, the symbolical Succah may convey the same lesson, impart the same hope.

X

SOME SUCCAHS I HAVE KNOWN

My earliest Succah was my mother's. In those days—how many years ago I do not care to count!—my summer holiday lasted exactly nine days a year. We needed no train to take us to our country destination—we just stepped into our little city garden. In brief, our one and only annual outing was spent in our Succah, and we young boys and girls enjoyed our change of scene far more than I have relished longer and more distant excursions in recent years. It has been said that the pleasures we make for ourselves are fuller and fairer than the pleasures which are given to us. Perhaps this is why we loved our Succah—for we made it ourselves. We did not employ a professional carpenter to put in a single nail, or plane a single beam. We bought rough logs and boards at the city timber yard, which was never rebuilt after the fire of a quarter of a century ago. We planed the logs and grazed our fingers, but the pain did not count. Though all these preparatory stages occurred a fortnight beforehand, the actual building operations never began until the night when the great Fast was over. Old traditions clung to us, and somehow

we knew that it was a special merit to close the Day of Atonement, hammer in hand, putting in the first nail of the Succah, passing as the Psalmist has it "from strength to strength."

Our Succah was much admired, but no critics were more enthusiastic than we were ourselves. It goes without saying that we had many visitors, for people in those days had a keen eye for a Succah. People who neglected us all the year, rubbed up their acquaintanceship as Tabernacles came round. We did not wonder that our Succah was popular, for we really believed that our architectural design was an original one, and I retained that notion until only a few days ago, when an old illustrated jargon book, printed in Amsterdam in 1723, was cruelly placed in my hands, and on page 45 I beheld to my chagrin the picture of just such a Succah as ours was. We put it together in this fashion. Four upright beams were connected at the top and at the bottom with cross bars of wood, and thus was obtained a hollow shell of substantial strength. Our next step was to put in the flooring. How we wasted our wood by ingeniously cutting the boards just three-quarters of an inch too short! But that difficulty was overcome, after many councils of war, and we then put on the roof, not flat, but sloping. The sloping roof was a great conception. It did away almost entirely with the rain difficulty, for the water glided off the thick leaves at the top and saved us from the necessity of tarpaulins or glass superstructures. Most people make the

Succah roof flat and then build a sloping wooden or glass frame above the roof. Our plan was not only prettier, but it enabled us to remain in our Succah without closing the top in all but very heavy showers. We had a tarpaulin ready in case of exceptional rain, but I can only recollect one or two occasions on which we scaled the garden walls and placed it in position over the greenery. But our master-stroke lay in the walls. There were no walls at all! A few lines of stout string made a lattice-work on which we fixed thick layers of fragrant myrtle branches and laurel leaves. The effect was fairy-like, and we did not spoil it by attempting to "paint the lily." The only decorations which we introduced were clusters of grapes, which trailed their luscious path along the very walls, a few citrons in their own early amber-yellow, which hung from the bright roof, and an odd chrysanthemum or two still growing in their mould, which added the necessary streaks of colour. All this was not so costly as it may sound, for we bought in very cheap markets, and saved much of the wood from one year to the next.

Over the way, our neighbours had their Succah too. This was also very pretty, and many preferred it to ours. It belonged to a more conventional and ornate type, for it was really a sort of summer-house which stood all the year and was dis-roofed when Tabernacles drew nigh. We boys used to like to have a hand in their decorations as well as in our own, though it went to our hearts

to see the beautiful apples and pears betinselled with wrappers of gold and silver paper. The gilder in those days was the only "proper" beautifier. Then, reams of coloured papers were cut into strips and twined into chains. Finally, out came the samplers which the girls worked with their own fingers. These samplers contained the Succah benedictions embroidered and crocheted in the drollest of droll Hebrew letters, but somehow as they were brought out year by year, and were hung in position on the walls with the *Mizrach* facing the West, a silence of mingled gladness and tenderness fell upon them all. It seemed like a stock-taking of past memories, and a renewal of past, forgotten loves. But we loved best our own little bit of nature unadorned.

Sadly lacking in ornament, whether natural or artificial, was a Succah which many of my readers will recollect. It belonged to a remarkable man now dead. He had more piety than pence. He occupied three or four rooms on the top floor of a tall house in Bevis Marks, and he had not even a square foot of open space. Must he therefore be robbed of the *mitsvah* of sitting in his own Succah, nay, of sleeping in it? Perish the thought! A convenient trap-door in one of his garrets suggested an ingenious plan. He first raised the trap-door, removed the skylight—which was very ricketty and easily detached—and hung sheets round the hole, the sheets trailing to the ground and beyond, and catching the feet of unwary visitors. Of course

we all would go and see this old gentleman every Tabernacles. He refused admittance to none, whether you could comfortably squeeze yourself in was your business not his. You plodded your weary way up five or six flights of stairs and stumbled through a hole in the sheetings. If you have never before seen the sight that greets you, prepare for a surprise! You would find no furniture in the room but a simple chair bedstead. One wall contained nothing but a red handkerchief on which was imprinted a fancy picture of Jerusalem with Moses and Aaron on either side of the Ten Commandments, while olive branches figured in all possible and impossible corners of the picture. The other wall was filled with a huge scroll on which, with his own hand, he had written out at great length the wonders of the Leviathan on which the good shall hereafter feed. But the most amazing thing was the host himself. He would be so seated that his head and shoulders were directly under the very aperture in the roof. He was near-sighted, but when he espied you, eagerly would he seize your arm and push *you* into the place which he vacated, so that *you* too had your head under the centre of the hole while you recited the proper blessing. Of course he slept in his queer Succah every night, and equally of course he had an annual cold in the head for at least three months afterwards.

Such humble constructions were almost invariably the result of poverty. One well-known case occurred in which a Succah was built on a small

balcony outside the first-floor window of a house in Amsterdam, if I remember accurately. The poor owner could not help himself. He could not act like our previous friend, for he did not live at the top of the house. So he just opened the window slightly at the top and slipped into the crevice half-a-dozen long sticks parallel to one another. (He was a stick-dealer by profession). Then he opened the lower half of the window, squeezing it up as tight as it would go. This lower part of the window he left open the whole week, for the Succah was made by covering the projecting sticks with leaves. The man who lived on the ground-floor was not a Jew, and beheld his first-floor neighbour's arrangements with astonishment. He remonstrated in vain, so he went to the magistrate for redress, and a summons was granted. The case came on just the day before Tabernacles, and the decision was a good joke, well remembered by many. "You are robbing this man of his light," said the magistrate, "and I give you *just eight days* in which to remove the obstruction." The Jew readily promised that he would obey the order of the court, which he did when the festival was over.

But one unsightly Succah that I knew, owed its ugliness to the owner's stinginess. He was very rich, but was a thorough miser. He made his Succah small to save his hoarded shillings; and he made it unattractive lest too many visitors should present themselves. He constructed the walls out of old packing-cases, and did not take

the trouble to erase the inscriptions daubed upon them. As you approached his Succah your eyes were greeted with the legend: "This side up with care," "Empty crate, to be returned," and so forth. The inscription that puzzled me most ran thus: "Dog-hooks not to be used." I never knew what a dog-hook was, and it only occurred to me to look while writing these reminiscences. I find from Lloyd's Dictionary that a dog-hook is a kind of iron bar, or wrench, for opening iron-bound cases; but a German toy-dealer tells me they are really hooks for cranes that are used chiefly for hoisting barrels but not suitable for slenderly made cases. This miserable man was one of the first I knew to apply to Baron Lionel de Rothschild for laurel branches to cover the roof of his Succah. Even in those days the Rothschilds never refused any such application, though the scale on which the branches are supplied is now far more extensive. I believe that special bushes and trees are planted at Gunnersbury to meet the ever-growing demand on Tabernacles. Many a poor East-End Jew, who would otherwise be forced to forego the pleasure, is thus enabled to build his Succah. But I do not quite see why some of my West-End friends also avail themselves of Mr. Leopold de Rothschild's princely generosity.

I have mentioned some humble Succahs, let me introduce my readers to a very beautiful one which might be seen a few years ago at the Hague.

Mr. D. Polak Daniels, a Warden of the Jewish congregation in the Hague, and a member of the Municipality and of the County Council for South Holland, is undoubtedly the owner of one of the handsomest Succahs that have ever been built. This notable Succah, which stands in the spacious garden in his residence in the Spuistraat, was built nearly forty-five years ago by Mr. Daniels's father-in-law. It is almost square, and constructed of wood and painted glass. The internal decorations are extremely handsome and tasteful, the prevailing colour being light blue. The coloured glass is very fine. The Succah is so constructed that when taken to pieces the panels of two of the sides form a box in which all the other parts are deposited. There is an interesting episode in connection with this Succah, the fame of which has spread beyond the confines of the Hague. During the lifetime of the late Queen of Holland this Succah was mentioned at her Majesty's dinner table. Queen Sophia was well versed in Jewish history and observances, and she expressed a wish to see Mr. Daniels's Succah, it being then the Feast of Tabernacles. The request was of course complied with, and on the following afternoon the Queen paid her visit, which lasted half-an-hour. In the course of conversation with her host her Majesty displayed her Jewish knowledge. She asked Mr. Daniels, for instance, whether he was a *Cohen*, and whether the *Cohanim* still adhered to the prohibition against touching a corpse. Although contrary to Court

etiquette to partake of refreshments, her Majesty made an exception in this case, in order to carry out the custom of eating and drinking in a tabernacle. On taking leave the Queen laughingly said to Mr. Daniels: "I take your word for a great deal, but you cannot make me believe that your ancestors in the desert lived in such splendid booths as this." What a contrast this to one poor fellow I knew who turned his shop-shutters into walls, and a few old flat baskets into roofing, rather than have no Succah at all. Indeed, there is room for both kinds of service to God, for the wealthy and the poor. If the service is cheerfully rendered, who knows which finds the more acceptance?

Yet I came out not to preach, but to jot down some memories of Succahs I have known. In my youth, the public Succah was not yet a popular institution. There was a rather fine one erected in the courtyard of Bevis Marks *Snoga*, but of that more anon. It must not be forgotten that if the city synagogues had no Succahs, the Rav's was an excellent substitute. When I first remember it, it was already large and substantial, with a fire-stove in it and, if I recollect truly, it was lit by gas. Old Dr. Adler received his guests with patriarchial courtliness, and the flow of learned discussion and of casual gossip on communal affairs was ceaseless. A fine feature in the late Rav's character—which his son inherits—was his cheerfulness. It was at a notable breakfast to the communal magnates given by Dr. Adler in his

Succah that the idea of the United Synagogue first took practical form. Opposite, on the other side of Finsbury Square, stood Jews' College, with a pretty Succah in a small glass conservatory on the stairs. I must have seen it during my father's tenure of the principalship, but only remember it as it was when Dr. Friedländer succeeded him. My experience has proved that Succahs are mostly made by those who have least room.

The Succah of the Bevis Marks Synagogue is the only one I have ever seen in which a distinction was made between rich and poor. But, after all, those who paid for the *mitsvah* deserved to get something for their money. There was, in fact, a reserved compartment for the wardens and officials and the high-born aristocracy, while the plebeians flocked into a larger and less ornate Succah which stood in front of the other. In my days the Sephardim did not build many private Succahs, the only ones I remember were those of Mogador and Gibraltar Jews, a stately specimen being that of Dayan Corcos in Bury Street. A fine old gentleman he was. Always dressed in Moorish costume, with a flowing white satin tunic, a crimson or yellow sash, and a red fez or a turban, he cut a splendid figure. He often welcomed me as a boy and gave me Mogador cakes, shaped like rings, the chief ingredient used in their concoction being almonds. But to return to Bevis Marks. The Succah was not a permanent brick building as it is with other syna-

gogues nowadays, still less was it used all the year round as the minister's drawing-room, a use made of the Tabernacle in a West-End synagogue. The Bevis Marks Succah was taken down piece by piece and stored in a shed through the year, side by side with an old obsolete fire-engine. Even in my youth the memory of the oldest inhabitant failed to recollect a single instance in which this fire-engine had been used. The Succah was pieced together every year; it was very strong, but, as I hinted before, was much more like a Succah than the brick constructions in the West-End synagogues nowadays, but these last are yearly becoming more beautiful, more bower-like. Well, the one I am now dealing with was painted green outside, but the inside was not pretty. The smaller reserved compartment was much more gorgeous, of course. But the larger public section had no proper greenery on the roof, for the covering was made of wickerwork. Though this was economical it was not æsthetic. I believe that it has been altered in recent years. But the most interesting feature of the Bevis Marks Succah was Mr. Belasco, the beadle. His tall, burly form recalled the pugilistic heroes which his family had produced in the past ages of the glorious prize-ring. This Mr. Belasco, however, was as good-humoured as he was big. Naturally, as there was no other public Succah in the neighbourhood, many *Tedescos* (German Jews) contrived to squeeze themselves into the company of the blue-blooded. Mr. Belasco enjoyed tracking

out the intruders. "These *Tedescos* are welcome to enter," he said, "but they shall have none of my olives." Let me explain. Mr. Belasco used to go round with a small keg of Spanish olives—even the olives were *Sephardic*—and permitted every hidalgo to insert his fingers and take one of the tempting morsels. This would go on merrily till Mr. Belasco came to an undoubted *Tedesco*. "You are not a Portugee," he would say. "O yes, I am a Portugee," was the response. Mr. Belasco was not taken in by the insinuating smile of his all-confident interlocutor. "If you are a Portugee, say *Shemang Yisrael*," came the crushing rejoinder. The mere *Tedesco* would attempt to repeat the first line of the *Shema'*, but would almost invariably say *Yitrael* for *Yisrael* —a common mistake of Ashkenazim who try to read in the Portuguese style. This new Shibboleth of Mr. Belasco's always succeeded in weeding out the interlopers, but much ready wit was displayed, and altogether every one enjoyed the scene immensely.

For the present I must break off here. I have forgotten to tell many things: how, for instance, one friend of mine reserved his finest tapestry for decorating his Succah walls and locked it up all the year. (This is recommended in the Talmud.) Another man I knew made an elaborate crown of leaves and flowers and fruits and suspended it from the ceiling of his dining-room to remind him of the Succah which he did *not* possess. The smallest Succah of the pretty type that I ever

entered was Mr. Bernays'. It was one of the daintiest objects on view at the Anglo-Jewish Exhibition. But we must beware lest we allow the Succah to find its way exclusively to museums. The Succah is an antiquity, but it must not become a mere object of curiosity to antiquarians. It has not yet exhausted its vital possibilities.

XI

"JUDÆA DEVICTA"

ANY one who is familiar with ancient and medieval forms of mourning has no difficulty in understanding the methods chosen for celebrating the Fast of the Ninth of Ab, the anniversary of the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem. Just as joy was exhibited by floods of light and music and song, by white or bright coloured attire, by merry greetings, by indulgence in meat and wine and other cheering food, by sitting on soft and luxurious cushions, sorrow was displayed by gloom and the absence of melody, by black dresses, by silent *rencontres* of friends, by sitting on the ground, by a vegetarian and strictly non-alcoholic diet, and a measured one at that. "All the signs of mourning for the dead are to be observed on the Ninth of Ab, but all the signs are to be intensified." It is sometimes supposed that the use of black draperies is restricted to the Sephardic synagogues. This is by no means true. In many German congregations similar signs of grief prevailed in the Middle Ages, and still linger on here and there. Thus, at Frankfort, where they had no special curtain for the Ark for use on this day, they turned the ordinary one inside out, and set it with its

embroidered face to the wall. The worshippers put on mourning garb and suspended from their hats long black streamers, which they caught up in their hands. But it was chiefly in the Orient that black luxuriated on the Ninth of Ab. To the Moslem, black is hateful: he wears it only when in deepest grief. The Jew is forced to wear black all the year round in the East, excepting of course the "protected" inhabitants of the coast towns. It is no special thing, then, for a Jew to appear in the Mellah decked in black; to show his grief on the Ninth of Ab, he decks his synagogue, too, in the same dismal attire. He takes the Scroll of the Law from its silver case, removes the bells and beautified mantle, and substitutes a black serge wrapping, simple in its mournful weirdness. In fact, this part of the Ninth of Ab rite is, I feel convinced, derived from Moslem and not from Christian example; it came from the East, not from the West. Surely it cannot be doubted that the dirges, too, are Eastern in type, that the abandonment to grief, as shown in tearful, moving, unmelodious tunes, is but an echo of the Oriental tendency to self-pity. But the Jew has never been a mere imitator, and here, too, he introduces something of his own nature. He sets some of the Ninth of Ab dirges to merry tunes and sings joyously between his tears, for he has gone through a real life and knows its incessant contrasts. This admixture of the merry with the miserable is found on the Ninth of Ab all the world over, and it says much for the reality of

Judaism. Judaism is indeed a living copy of life, and it showed its marvellous power to win men's love through their humanity in the tradition that just as the Temple fell on the Ninth of Ab, so the Messiah would come again on that self-same day.

Of course the merry notes are rare on this anniversary. Yet art is never absent. The tricks of the Cantor in the Middle Ages were worthy of the actor. Indeed, a Jew gifted with a voice and emotional power, having no other outlet to his talent, was perforce compelled to insinuate some of the devices of the stage into the synagogue. With slow step the Cantor would advance in front of the Scroll sighing, like a love-lorn tenor in the opera: "Mourn, O Law, for thy beauty is veiled to-day," or he would take a handful of ashes and strew them in the Ark murmuring, "Ashes in place of garlands." But in the evening the theatrical element was even more marked, and I am not using *theatrical* in a disrespectful sense. The candles were lit for evening prayer droned to dirgeful tunes. The Cantor would be seated on the steps leading up to the Ark. The beadle then would go round and extinguish all the candles, leaving but one to give a dim religious light at the small table by which the Cantor would lie prostrate as he read the "Lamentations of Jeremiah." Now was his opportunity. If he has power to move an audience to tears, now he will use it! But stay, before he begins, a white-haired elder rises and says, *in the vernacular*, Arabic, Spanish, or English as the case may be: "Thus

and thus many years are passed since the First Temple fell, thus and thus many years since the Second Temple was destroyed, yet are we not saved. Woe unto us, we have sinned. Each of us in whose days the Temple is not again built up is as he in whose days the Temple was destroyed." Tears and groans greeted this announcement. Let it not be held strange that the vernacular was used, for curiously enough the use of the vernacular has long been common on the Ninth of Ab. The Sephardim in London, of course, would not dream of translating the Haftara into English, but they do translate it verse by verse into Spanish on this fast day. It is still translated (with the Book of Job) into Arabic in Cairo and Morocco. Then came the "Lamentations." The Cantor began in a whisper, but a whisper that could penetrate. Gradually his voice rose, until as the end came near, its full volume swelled forth in dire, distressful tears. As he proceeded the congregation punctuated his lines with sighs of "Woe! Sorrow!" or with the exclamation, "O God, remember." Perhaps he would go a step further. He would place the Scroll, not on a desk or table, but on the recumbent back of a fellow-worshipper who would kneel in front of him—further type of Zion's glory trailing in the dust.

At home, before this scene was enacted—and now I am talking of Jews all the world over—there came a fitting preparation. Many Jews imagine that the delivering of homilies in the home is un-Jewish, but this is mere ignorance.

The home sermon was a familiar Jewish institution in the Middle Ages; as, indeed, was *street preaching* in the Jewish ghettos. Well, on the eve of the Ninth of Ab, the final meal before the fast began was partaken with every sign of mourning; barefooted, seated on the ground, with ashes around and on his lips, the father would address his household in a few sad words. Then they would eat mourners' food: especially eggs and lentils, because, as the poetical explanation had it, "eggs have no mouth, and our grief is too strong also for words." In mediæval Babylon the Jews wore no shoes all day on this anniversary; they did not even wear them in the afternoon, but in the time of the Geonim carried their shoes with them in their hands to afternoon prayer on the Ninth of Ab, and only put them on when the fast was quite over. But Jews were often gifted with good sense; and in the Middle Ages when the non-Jewish rabble jeered at the sight of the barefooted Jews, R. Joel Levi, of Wurzburg, in 1220, ordained that this rite was not to be observed except within the precincts of the Jewish quarter. If the fast fell on a Sunday, then on the Saturday evening they would go to synagogue in their boots, but would remove them, no doubt with a woeful clatter, when the Cantor began. I must not omit one point. In the Middle Ages an official called the *Schul-Klopfer* used to summon people to synagogue by knocking at the doors of the congregants' houses, and also by blows dealt at the door of the synagogue. But on the eve and

morning of the Ninth of Ab this summons was omitted, though at the afternoon service the ordinary habit was resumed. Friend met friend in silence, and, most marked token of all, those who were called up to the Law were not saluted with the customary greeting as they completed the *Mitsvah*.

To describe the way in which they passed the time not spent in the synagogue, is easily done in a few lines. They did little work, and less reading. There is evidence that it was occasionally found difficult to restrain the idle congregation from indulging in frivolous occupations to while away the dreary time. But, on the other hand, some spent the whole night and day in synagogue, as on the Day of Atonement, but curious to tell no weird legends have grown up round the Black Fast, as they have round the White. Perhaps this is because the Jews on the former occasion themselves visited the graves of the dead, and thus there was no room for ghostly intruders among the living, as on *Kol Nidre* night. Why did the Jews visit the cemeteries? First, no doubt, because of the general mourning complexion of the whole celebration, but there was another reason. Especially in the East, pilgrimages are made on this day to the supposed graves of departed prophets and other Jewish worthies of remote or nearer antiquity. Here is a beautiful instance of solidarity. No doubt many Jewish ascetics in the Middle Ages and in Talmud times wished to go further. They wished

so to link their griefs with those of their fathers that they sought throughout their lives to retain tokens of sorrow as memorials of the destruction. The visits paid to the tombs on the Ninth day of Ab belong to the most poetical of these memorials. Some may call them superstitious: I think myself that poetical is the right word to use. For on the Ninth of Ab, the Midrash tells us, the Patriarchs move in their graves with grief, and weep at the sight of their children's exile. In Kalir's beautiful dirge, Jeremiah is represented as standing at the Cave of Machpelah where the Patriarchs lie buried. Kalir opens thus:—

"The Prophet standing by the fathers' graves,
With soul o'erwhelmed he speaks, for solace craves;—
How can ye lie at rest, beloved ones,
While sharpened swords consume your captive sons?
Where now, O fathers, lurks your merit rare
In that vast wilderness of land laid bare?
They cry each one with lamentation sore
For children banished, sons that are no more;
They pray imploring with a cry for grace,
To Him who dwelleth in the realms of space.
Ah! where is now God's promise made of old?
'I will not my first covenant withhold.'"

One by one the Fathers rise and implore God's help on behalf of his sorrowing children. At last this gracious message of God is given in response to their pleading:—

"Turn, O ye perfect ones,
Unto your rest again;
I will fulfil for you
All that your hearts desire

Down unto Babylon
With you My Presence went,
Surely will I return
Your sons' captivity."

These feelings may be shared surely by all Jews even though they do not all dream of a future Return, even though they do not all long for the restoration of Zion's glory. If Christians could for centuries join the Jews in celebrating the Ninth of Ab, surely the most lukewarm of us may find his heart fanned at least into a momentary Love for Zion by the thought of what our fathers suffered in order that we might survive to-day.

XII

THE DECALOGUE IN THE LITURGY

The restoration of the Ten Commandments to their place in the service of the synagogue is one of the most notable of recent reversions to the past. There are now several synagogues in London alone in which this charter of social and religious virtue is recited from the pulpit every week. The Talmud says: "Of right they should read the Ten Words every day. For what reason do they not read them? On account of the cavilling of the heretics, so that they might not say: These only were given to Moses on Sinai." How strangely the wheel turns round in human thought! The modern "heretic," in the guise of the Higher Critic, often singles out the Decalogue as the very thing that he thinks was *not* given to Moses at all. I do not share this doubt, for I have never seen adequate reason for doubting the Mosaic date of the Decalogue.

Though the Ten Commandments were discharged from the liturgy, Rabbinical fancy retained them by the interesting and ingenious discovery that the Decalogue is embodied in the Shema'. The details are somewhat forced, but the main thought is natural and true. The whole Torah, so

far as concerns its moral contents, can be evolved from almost any one of its characteristic passages. With regard to the liturgical use of the Decalogue, I hardly know what to infer from the fact that the Ten Words seem in the early Middle Ages to have been sometimes written on separate little scrolls. I saw one at Cairo, taken from the Geniza, and reference is made to such scrolls in the Responses of the Gaonim. Possibly the Nash *papyrus* is of the same character.

Not only was the Decalogue read from the Scroll of the Law twice a year as the regular Sabbath portion, when the turn came for the 20th chapter of Exodus and the 5th chapter of Deuteronomy, but, naturally, the Ten Words were also chosen for the Pentateuchal lesson on the Feast of Weeks. According to Dr. Büchler we must, however, reverse the cause and effect. He ingeniously shows that in the normal sequence of the Triennial reading of the Law, the Decalogue fell to Pentecost in the second year of the cycle. Hence the traditional association of Pentecost with the giving of the Law. In Palestine, the Pentecost lesson began with Exodus xx., but the Babylonian custom resembled our own, and Exodus xix. was included. In accordance with the Triennial cycle, the Decalogue in Deuteronomy fell sometimes on the New Year's day, and the Samaritans read the Ten Commandments not only on Pentecost but also on New Year. The Commandments were translated verse by verse into Aramaic. Of course, such translation accompanied all the readings from

the Pentateuch, but the Decalogue enjoyed special rights in this respect. The Midrash says that every Commandment was spoken at Sinai in seventy languages, so that all the world could hear and understand the divine revelation. It is not inconceivable, from the long Aramaic additions after each Commandment which are found in the Machzor Vitry, that the custom of translating the Decalogue into Aramaic was continued in medieval France. It is extremely probable that the Aramaic piyutim *Akdamuth Millin* and *Yetsib Pithgam* are a survival of this custom. Arabic replaced the Aramaic in Yemen and elsewhere. The special liturgical value attaching to the reading of the Decalogue is further shown by the general practice of using a special "niggun" (or cantillation), and also of standing during the public reading of the passage. Some pietists always stand while the Pentateuch is being read, but the general habit is to remain seated. One finds some authorities offering a curious objection to the custom, except on Pentecost and a few other occasions. The person called to the Law was wont to bow during the recital of the benediction when he ascended the reading-desk. Now if the congregation were also standing, it would appear as though he were bowing to his fellow-worshippers, and this was regarded as objectionable. Yet the custom of bowing to the Wardens is not confined to the Sephardim, and politeness seems to have prevailed against the scruple just mentioned. Be that as it may, none of these ecstatic displays

of feeling prevalent on the Rejoicing of the Law ever appear to have occurred on Pentecost. The flowers and the fruits which decorated the synagogue gave a festive air to the scene, but the occasion was too serious for indulging in the wilder displays associated with the Rejoicing of the Law.

An extensive liturgical use of the Decalogue was made by the poetanim, as in Kalir's *Kerobah* for the second day of Pentecost. This is a metrical commentary on the Ten Commandments, and a fine translation of parts of the hymn is given by Zunz. Of another type were the numerous *Azharoth*, which contained a summary of the 613 precepts into which the Pentateuchal commands were grouped. According to the Gaon Nachshon's enumeration there are actually 613 words in the Decalogue, but there was, apart from any such numerical motive, a natural desire to include the whole of the Law in the homilies for the Feast of Weeks. In the all-night service celebrated in some homes on the previous evening, a section from every Sedrah is read, and the motive is the same. According to one Midrash, the Decalogue was written on the two tables of stone with long intervals, which gave space for adding all the rest of the precepts. These fancies grew up luxuriantly. It was felt, for instance, that the stones on which such precious words were written could not have been of ordinary material, but, to say the least, were made of diamond. The chips cut out during the engraving were

enough to enrich Moses for life. There is no doubt a homiletical meaning in Midrashim of this class, a meaning so clear that it is superfluous to offer any help to the reader. The Decalogue was a source of wealth and of life: it enriched mankind and gave it vitality.

Have the Ten Commandments become obsolete? Are not the great principles "Love God," "Love man," enough? Let me answer in the words of Miss Wordsworth, taken from her excellent little book on the Decalogue: "No doubt, any one who truly loved God and loved his neighbour would abstain from the acts forbidden in these Commandments; but, on the other hand, how easy it is to profess religious feelings in the abstract and never to bring our acceptance of a general principle to bear on the particular instances at all? . . . . The Inquisition professed great 'love' for the souls of those whom it tortured. . . . In fact, of not one of the Commandments can it be said that a mere general profession of love to God and man can be substituted for it. The ingenuity which the human mind displays, the sophistries which it employs in order to make what is supposed to be expedient seem right, the delicate shading by which it veils a disgraceful or undutiful act, the artifices to which it condescends, the self-flatteries which it is capable of where conscience is concerned, can only be met by plain, simple, distinct laws with great principles behind them such as we meet with in the Ten Commandments." All honour, then, to those who

strove in the past and strive in the present to make the Decalogue a living force in the liturgy of the synagogue.

A reference has been made, or rather a hint given, to certain modern controversies regarding the re-introduction of the Decalogue into the regular liturgy. In all these matters, however, controversy has a way of softening with time into forbearance. And, in a very similar case, the Middle Ages supply a splendid instance of mutual toleration. The Jewish traveller, Benjamin of Tudela, visited Egypt in the latter part of the twelfth century, and he reports as follows: "Here are two synagogues, one of the congregation of Palestine, called the Syrian, the other of the Babylonian Jews. They follow different customs regarding the division of the Pentateuch into *parashioth* and *sedarim*. The Babylonians read one *parasha* every week, as is the custom throughout Spain, and finish the whole of the Pentateuch every year (annual cycle). But the Syrians have the custom of dividing every *parasha* into three *sedarim*, thus completing the reading of the whole Pentateuch once in three years (triennial cycle)." And now note what follows. Despite this important liturgical difference, says Benjamin, "they uphold, however, the long-established custom to unite the two congregations and to pray together on the Rejoicing of the Law, and on the feast of Pentecost, the day of the Giving of the Law."

We should be the better nowadays for something of this medieval tolerance. "The law which Moses

commanded unto us is a heritage of the congregation of Israel." Jew may differ from Jew, but on two days in the year Jew and Jew may and must unite. Brother must rejoice with brother in the Law; brother must stand by brother while the Decalogue is again read on the day associated with memories of Sinai.

XIII

BY THE WATER-SIDE

"And Thou wilt cast (Heb. *Tashlich*) all their sins into the depths of the seas"—thus runs a line in the lyric epilogue to the book of the prophet Micah. A curious Jewish ceremony has attached itself to this text, deriving its very name (*Tashlich*) from the first word of the Hebrew original. On the afternoon of the Jewish New Year Festival it is still the custom for very many to betake themselves to the sea-shore, or to some river or flowing brook, to invoke the forgiveness of sin, while repeating verses such as Micah vii. 19.

Now it is quite true that the ceremony received, and to a certain extent deserved, ridicule and condemnation. For some who observed the custom would cast pieces of bread and other objects into the water, or shake out their garments into it, as though physically transferring their sins into the scapegoat river. With their usual religious insight medieval Rabbis, who were the first to know of the custom, denounced and prohibited this materialisation of a symbolical rite. For it established a fictitious connection with superstitions which have hardly anything in common with itself. Occasional or periodical expulsions of diseases and

sins by placing puppets in boats let loose to drift seawards—with such heathen ideas which have continued to modern times, *Tashlich* has no real connection. In ancient Babylonia we read, on the other hand, of casting into the waters tablets on which were inscribed men's trespasses. With this again *Tashlich* cannot be associated, except in so far as both imply a symbolical cleansing from sin.

In the later Middle Ages, *Tashlich* was explained by a Midrash in which figure Abraham and Isaac —the two heroes of the New Year Festival in the Jewish liturgy. Abraham, so runs the legend, was on his way with Isaac to Moriah when the Satan presented himself in the guise of an exceedingly meek old man. "Foolish man," said the Satan to Abraham; "canst thou really believe that God has commanded so wicked a sacrifice as thou art about to offer?" Abraham knew from these words that the man must be the Satan, desirous of turning him from obedience to God; so he rebuked the old man, who departed from him. Then the Satan returned disguised as a shining youth. Addressing Isaac he said: "Knowest thou not that thy foolish old father is leading thee to death? My son, follow him not, for he is old and witless." Isaac repeated these words to Abraham, who explained the true character of their interlocutor. The Satan again left them, but hurried on in advance, and transformed himself into a stream of water, broad and deep, stretching across their road. The patriarch and his son plunged straight in, and the water covered them to the

neck. Then Abraham recognised the place and knew that there was no natural river there at all. "It is the Satan," cried Abraham. "Beshrew thee, thou Satan, and get thee gone." And the Satan fled, finally discomfited. Obviously, this story has nothing to do with *Tashlich;* it became, however, usual to find such a connection and to explain the custom as designed "to call to mind the efficacy of the offering of Isaac." But the Midrash and the theory have some points of interest. For, we can see that the Jewish consciousness was quite alive to the difficulty presented by the character of the *Akeda* (literally the *binding* of Isaac). It put into "the Satan's" mouth a thought which often troubled Jewish readers of Genesis, and it mitigated the difficulty by directing attention less to the trial than to the tried, resting less on what God asked than on what Abraham and Isaac were prepared to do, pointing to the unbending fidelity of the father and the loving assent of the child. The *Akeda* thus became the type of Israel's loyalty under trial and suffering. "Remember, O God, the binder and the bound," is the refrain of a popular New Year's hymn. It was a pathetic appeal to the "merit of the fathers," though Israel had little need to rest its appeal on the past. Throughout the ages, Israel went on faithfully rendering himself up a willing sacrifice. When Israel is true to the virtues of the fathers its appeal to their merits is efficacious because unnecessary.

Of praying by the water-side we occasionally hear in the Bible. Moses sang his song by the

shores of the Red Sea; Jonah uttered his thanksgiving on a Mediterranean coast. "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion." Israel could not sing the songs of Zion there, but could weep, "and tears," said the Rabbi, "are an ever-open gate to the mercy-seat." More interesting, however, than these odd references, are the evidences we find of a fondness for praying by the water-side. Tertullian speaks of the *orationes litorales* of the Jews, *i.e.* open-air prayer-meetings by the river bank or seashore. Philo tells us that in times of stress, the Alexandrians prayed at the seashore, *that being the purest place.* Josephus quotes a remarkable decree of Halicarnassus (on the S.W. coast of Asia Minor). It runs thus: "The decree of the Halicarnassians. Before Memnon the priest, the decree of the people, upon the motion of Marcus Alexander, was as follows: Since we have ever a great regard to piety towards God and to holiness, following the people of the Romans, who are the benefactors of all men, and what they have written to us about a league of friendship and alliance between the Jews and our city, that their sacred rites and accustomed feasts and assemblies may be observed by them; we have decreed, that as many men and women of the Jews as wish to do so, may celebrate their Sabbaths, and perform their holy rites, according to the Jewish laws, *and have their places of prayer by the seaside, according to the customs*

of their forefathers; and if any one, whether a magistrate or private person, hinders them from so doing, he shall be liable to a fine, to be paid to the city."

It has been suggested that Jews preferred the shore because they required water for their many ritual purifications. But the theory is unsatisfactory. In Palestine the synagogues were in the centre of the cities, and even in the coast towns were situated on the highest points attainable, and must thus have been as far as could be from the actual shore. But in heathen environments, an extra-mural site was preferred. In a typical Greek city, the Temple would occupy the central position, and the whole life of the people would turn round it. To avoid idolatrous contamination, the Jew would place his synagogue outside the walls. But the ancient cities in Asia Minor followed the line of sea or river. An extra-mural site would therefore often be identical with the shore of river or sea.

XIV

GOD AND MAN

No consistent structure of justification by faith or works is raised in the Jewish Atonement liturgy. "What shall we say, how shall we justify ourselves? . . . Thy right hand, O God, is stretched out for the penitent." Do your best and leave the rest to God, is the sum of the day's teaching. Human regret and amendment, prayer and promise, condition, as it were, God's pardon; they do not command or earn it. The forgiveness of sins is God's prerogative, but He has shown man the way to Him.

Judaism often refuses to accept either of two alternatives, but tries to accept both, to discover a higher harmony reconciliatory of opposites. To hold that "good deeds" make easy and certain the path to heaven may land us in a mechanical system of external rites, and weaken the consciousness of sin. Penitence may degenerate into penance.

On the other hand, it is not well for man to rest too completely in the belief that atonement is a mere phase of the divine grace. It is not well for man to take the statement of Exodus

xxxiii. 19: "I am gracious unto those to whom I am gracious, and I show mercy unto those to whom I show mercy," as a complete enunciation of the relation of God to His erring world. Judaism is right in building also on a human foundation; in planting on firm earth the feet of the ladder by which man's soul may ascend heavenwards.

The Hebrew word for repentance is *Teshubah*, which literally means *return*. Other elements in repentance are *sorrow*, or *regret* (the literal meaning of *repentance*), and change of heart (the Greek *metanoia*), both of which are expressed in confession of sins. But the Hebrew word *Teshubah*, or *return*, "emphasises the last aspect of repentance: its practical result. The issue of repentance must be a *return* from transgression, from the *overstepping* of right, from the straying aside out of the path of righteousness into the devious byways of sin, back once more into the straight road of duty and unselfishness and love. True repentance is no mere momentary spasm of remorse: to be worthy the name it must influence and leave its mark on character, and therefore upon action and upon life" (Montefiore).

Again, the antithesis may be put in this way. God is transcendent; that is, He is high above and outside the world of man. God is unsearchable, unreachable. God's nature is too unlike man's for him to use, unless in a figurative sense, anthropomorphic language in

describing the Deity. As Jehuda Halevi, when in this mood, sang in a hymn for the Day of Atonement:—

> "God! whom shall I compare to Thee,
> When Thou to none canst likened be?
> Under what image shall I dare
> To picture Thee, when everywhere
> All Nature's forms Thine impress bear?
>
> Can heart approach, can eye behold
> Thee in Thy righteousness untold?
> Whom didst Thou to Thy counsel call,
> When there was none to speak withal,
> Since Thou was first and Lord of all?"

Push this to its logical outcome, and Judaism deserves the taunt: "See how far off is the God of the Jews from them, they address Him like slaves, they figure Him as an autocrat standing aloof, without human sympathies." But Judaism does not push the thought to its logical consequences. Such passages as the one just quoted simply emphasise the folly of likening God too much to man. The old sarcasm that men in all ages have made God in their own image hardly applies to the Jewish poets at their best. But Jehuda Halevi did not close his hymn without abandoning this lofty, transcendent theory. He built a bridge across which the penitent may find his way, not easily or surely, but tentatively and with many a stumble. This bridge is Righteousness; from one point of view it is the divine Law which lowers God to Sinai, from another it is man's obedience

and service which raise him to the hill-top. In the same hymn our most inspired new-Hebrew poet sings:—

> "Thy righteousness we can discern,
> Thy holy law proclaim and learn.
> Is not Thy presence near alway
> To them who penitently pray,
> But far from those who sinning stray?"

This leads to the other side of the contrast. Does this last line look as though Jehuda Halevi thought little of sin? Judaism, whether for good or ill, if it erred at all erred on the side of branding the sinner. No, our liturgical poets did not make light of sin; for, as another Jewish poet of Spain wrote in a sublime meditation (also found in the liturgy of the Day of Atonement):—

> "Thou, God, art the Light
> That shall shine in the soul of the pure;
> Now Thou art hidden by sin, by sin with its clouds of night.
> Now Thou art hidden, but then, as over the height,
> Then shall Thy glory break through the clouds that obscure,
> And be seen in the mount of the Lord."

Would that the whole of this inspiring poem, "The Royal Crown" of Solomon Ibn Gebriol, could be faithfully rendered into English! Fine thought is here, and fiery phrase, stanzas instinct with God, dark with a consciousness of sin, bright with confidence in God's mercy. The

boldest figure in the poem I may venture to expand and paraphrase thus:—

"When all without is dark,
And former friends misprise;
From them I turn to Thee,
And find love in Thine eyes.

When all within is dark,
And I my soul despise;
From me I turn to Thee,
And find love in Thine eyes.

When all Thy face is dark,
And Thy just angers rise;
From Thee I turn to Thee,
And find love in Thine eyes."

What a wealth of religious beauty, what an armoury of spiritual force, is provided in one single poem of Nachmanides, written also for the Day of Atonement. First mark this thirteenth-century poet's sense of sin; Nachmanides, so far from slurring it over, almost over-deepens the darkness of its cloud.

"Now conscience-stricken, humbled to the dust,
Doubting himself, in Thee alone his trust,
He shrinks in terror back, for God is just—
How can a sinner hope to reach the King?"

But here the Jewish road turns. God is merciful, if the sinner is conscious of his guilt. He offers His grace freely, for when man has worked out his own salvation in part, with what bountiful mercy does God finish the reconciliation which man has so weakly, so inefficiently

begun! Nachmanides, of course, held with all other exponents of Judaism, that the true reconciliation only ends with amendment, that a noble life counts more than an eloquent prayer. But in this hymn he lays his stress on feeling; he sees that man's fulfilment can never equal his ideals; the task is greater than his power of accomplishment. And so Nachmanides speaks of confession, of the sinner's new disposition to right, rather than of any possible proportion between bettered act and penitent intention. Thus he continues:—

"Oh, be Thy mercy in the balance laid,
To hold Thy servant's sins more lightly weighed,
When, his confession penitently made,
He answers for his guilt before the King.

Thine is the love, O God, and Thine the grace,
That holds the sinner in its mild embrace;
Thine, the forgiveness, bridging o'er the space
'Twixt man's work and the task set by the King."

And beyond the doctrine taught, would hymns like this, and many others which fill the Day of Atonement liturgy, fail to move the worshippers' hearts, could they but understand them? These hymns are not designedly didactic, only incidentally do they lay down the Jewish belief on sin and atonement, on God and man; they are in essence the cry of contrite and beautiful souls, yearning for God, for His presence, for His light, a cry alas! all but inarticulate to-day. But still we may echo where we cannot sing ourselves. Fain would one believe that many a Jew,

pouring out his heart before the Lord on the Day of Atonement, may feel the power and echo the aspiration of the following lines, written by Jehuda Halevi for the great day. Nowhere, not even in Newman's famous hymn, are the relations between God and man more inspiringly expressed in so few lines :—

"So lead me that I may
Thy sovereign will obey.
Make pure my heart to seek Thy truth divine ;
When burns my wound, be Thou with healing near,
Answer me, Lord ! for sore distress is mine,
And say unto Thy servant, I am here !

O would that I might be
A servant unto Thee,
Thou God by all adored ;
Then, though by friends out-cast,
Thy hand would hold me fast,
And draw me near to Thee, my King and Lord."

XV

"CHAD GADYA"

"THEN came the Holy One, blessed be He, and slew the Angel of Death that slew the slaughterer that killed the ox that drew the water that quenched the fire that burned the stick that beat the dog that bit the cat that ate the kid which my father bought for two zuzim. One only kid, one only kid" (*Chad Gadya*). Thus runs the last paragraph of the famous "Song of the Kid," "now known," as Mr. G. A. Kohut rightly says, "to have been borrowed from, or fashioned after, a popular German ballad, the prototype of which seems to have been an old French song."

The anonymous author who, at the close of the sixteenth century, appended the "Song of the Kid" to the Passover Haggadah, was a true poet. He not only saw that beneath this jingle lay a deep symbolical motive, but he perceived, too, that this motive was identical with the central idea of the whole narrative of the Passover which precedes it.

Some readers will at once shake their wise heads at this suggestion. They will urge that the whole thing is a child's story, that it has

many parallels in the literature of the nursery, and that to laboriously seek a moral in trifles of this kind is like crushing a butterfly under a steam hammer.

Now if it were indeed true that the *Chad Gadya* or any of its parallels had been current for ages in the ranks of Jewish children, I should be the first to protest against allegorising away its lisping quaintness just because the poem had crept into our liturgy. But what are the facts? First and foremost, there was hardly such a thing as a Jewish child-literature at all. This is not strange when one remembers that the unravelling of fables, riddles, and parables was regarded by Jews of all ages as work not for children, but for the wisest of men. The Jew always liked his folk-lore to have a moral, and this in itself made it hard for such folk-lore to be the property of the child. This remark applies to others besides Jews. It must not be forgotten that only in modern times have Æsop and Bidpai fallen into the possession of the young. They were once the food of philosophers, not the pap of infants. So little of child-literature is there in Jewish records that one can scarcely discover even one genuine Jewish lullaby. The "Cradle Songs" printed in the *Jewish Encyclopedia* fully confirm this conclusion. Hence I feel quite unable to assent to the view of Mr. Kohut and most others that the *Chad Gadya* is "simply a Jewish nursery rhyme."

Not only is it impossible to produce from Jewish

sources any nursery parallels to *Chad Gadya*, but of *Chad Gadya* itself only the remotest hint has been discovered, even in the literature of Jewish adults, until the close of the sixteenth century. I am not now alluding to hymns or parables of the cumulative type, for in *Dayenu* we have what is probably a rather old form, of which one may detect a clear trace in the Midrash Rabbah. There is also a faint similarity between *Chad Gadya* and the following Talmudic parable: "A mountain is strong, Iron cleaves it; Iron is strong, fire melts it; Fire is strong, water quenches it; Water is strong, clouds absorb it; Clouds are strong, the Wind scatters them; the Wind is strong, the Body carries it; the Body is strong, Fear rends it; Fear is strong, Wine overpowers it; Wine is strong, sleep conquers it; Death is stronger than all, yet Charity delivereth from Death" (*Baba Bathra*, 10A). Yet the parallel between this and *Chad Gadya*, the one a moral *parable* the other an animal *fable*, is only remote. In the Talmudic parable the ideas of Nemesis and of the Divine Providence are equally absent. The fact that *Chad Gadya* is composed in Chaldaic, is no proof of antiquity. Several similar *jeux d'esprit* were written at various late dates in similar mongrel Aramaic—in fact, the other addition to the Haggadah, the "I know one" cumulation, also drops into Aramaic occasionally. That the *Chad Gadya* is *late* is probable also from the peculiarity that the whole is full of

marked assonances amounting almost to genuine rhymes. No old Chaldaic composition presents this feature so prominently. It is possible that the translator wrote in Chaldaic because he wished to give an antique look to his modern rendering of a non-Jewish song. But it is not difficult to suggest another reason why the translator of the *Chad Gadya* chose Aramaic rather than Hebrew as his medium. It will be remembered that the Seder opens with a passage in Aramaic. What more natural than for the interpolator of the *Chad Gadya* to close the Seder with a passage in Aramaic also? There is even some distant similarity in the message given by the two passages. An opening sentence of the Haggadah reads: "This year we are slaves, next year may we be free." The closing phrase of the *Chad Gadya* runs: "Then came the Holy One, Blessed be He, and slew the Angel of Death." In both the idea of Providence is paramount: the idea that in the good time to come troubles will cease and God's rule on earth be established.

It is, I am well aware, a matter of profound difficulty to explain the original growth of cumulative stories. But in point of fact, the *Chad Gadya* is, from the Jewish standpoint, precisely one of those cases in which the origin of the poem is of less import than the interpretation put upon it by those who admired and cherished it, and converted it into a devotional hymn. It was not a spontaneous creation of the people,

but a late literary adaptation set in an archaic and artificial idiom, and modified from its original, as we shall see, in a very curious and sophisticated way. Possibly the child element had something to do with its introduction into the Haggadah—it may have seemed justifiable to adapt a nursery rhyme for use in a service designed for children. But I doubt this. First there is no evidence whatever that the adaptor ever knew the poem as a nursery song; secondly, the difficult idiom is hardly one which would have been chosen for children; and lastly the jingle appears at the very termination of the service, when the children are mostly asleep. In the seventeenth century it is the moralist and maggid, not the mother and nursery-maid, that use the *Chad Gadya* as a familiar theme.

Now as to the sophistication. Many writers have pointed out numerous parallels to the *Chad Gadya*, and lately that promising young scholar, Mr. G. A. Kohut, has written well and learnedly on the subject. But I think that most of these collectors of parallels have missed a remarkable fact, pointed out, if I remember aright, by M. Gaston, Paris, in 1872. Yet the fact is of the first importance in understanding the motives that led to the introduction of the *Chad Gadya* into the Passover-service.

In most of the real parallels to the *Chad Gadya*, there is much stress laid on the unwillingness of the various forces to play the parts

allotted to them. To cite one instance only, from the nearest parallel to *Chad Gadya*, viz.: "The old Woman and her Pig"—"Cat! Cat! kill rat; rat won't gnaw rope; rope won't hang butcher; butcher won't kill ox; ox won't drink water; water won't quench fire; fire won't burn stick; stick won't beat dog; dog won't bite pig; piggy won't get over the style—and I shan't get home to-night." This is a typical instance; and the refusal of the various characters to act, their resistance, is of the very essence of this and parallel stories. But in *Chad Gadya* the position is absolutely reversed. In that poem the agents display no manner of unwillingness to perform the work of destruction, to exhibit their mastery over their inferiors. They act after their kind. The writer of *Chad Gadya* might have been compiling a Midrashic expansion of the fiftieth chapter of Jeremiah: (verses 17-29), "Israel is a scattered sheep; the lions have driven him away: first the King of Assyria devoured him, and last this Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, hath broken his bones. . . . Therefore, I will punish the King of Babylon . . . Slay all her bullocks! . . . I will kindle a fire in his cities. . . . A sword is upon the Chaldeans. . . . A drought is upon her waters and they shall be dried up. . . . the wild beasts of the desert shall dwell there." In the *Chad Gadya*, as in Jeremiah, the characters play the part of destiny, they are links in the chain of causes and effects, at the end of which is the divine will, directing and controlling,

if not now, at all events in some good time to come.

This remarkable and wholly unique feature of the *Chad Gadya*, its treatment of the various agencies as acting willingly, or if unwillingly only so in the sense that they are moved by an inexorable and fatal necessity to do their part—this, I maintain, clearly solves the enigma of the presence of the poem in the Seder-service. Every enemy of Israel, in the adaptor's theory, acts after his kind, destroying Israel and Israel's other destroyers. But yet all these fatal forces are really in the control of God; they are His instruments, and in the end will be blunted by His love for His world. Israel is undoubtedly, in the adaptor's view, the kid, the hero of the concatenated drama.

Equally, without doubt, the introducer of *Chad Gadya* into the Haggadah meant to typify by the other characters successive rulers of the destiny of the world. But it is absurd to hold that the writer intended the allegory to be explained literally and in detail. Lebrecht in 1731, published an elaborate solution of the Enigma, as he and many others termed it. The Kid is Israel; the two coins, Aaron and Moses (who were the means by which the father, God, bought the kid, Israel, from Egypt); the Cat is Assyria; the Dog, Babylon; the stick, Persia; the Fire, Greece, or rather Macedonia; the Water, Rome; the Ox, the Saracen power; the Butcher, the Crusaders; the Angel of Death, Turkey, whom

God will in the end destroy, and then restore the Jews to Palestine. How modern this last suggestion seems.

Lebrecht's fanciful explanation has won more general acceptance than it deserved. It is certainly far-fetched and unconvincing. But Christian Andreas Teuben fell into the opposite error when, in his quaintly-named pamphlet *Chad Gadya lo Israel*, he denied that the story has anything to do with Israel. In its origin, certainly it had no such connection, but the adaptor of it for the Passover Liturgy clearly did have before his mind a panorama of the History of Israel and the world as Israel was affected by it. As to the details of the application, Teuben rightly says: "As many Jews, so many explanations." The ten plagues have been ingeniously read into the *Chad Gadya*, and so has the sacrifice of Isaac. It is not wonderful that preachers and maggidim have offered innumerable explanations of the *Chad Gadya*. The poem is in truth a summary of the Enigma of Life, and who shall claim that he possesses the one and only clue to that great mystery? The solutions of the riddle form another *Chad Gadya* more hopelessly involved than the one which they started out to unravel.

XVI

MYRTLE

ENGLISH poets have not extracted much fragrance from the myrtle, probably because the shrub does not grow wild in the British Isles. Byron preferred the youthful forehead garlanded with myrtle and ivy to the older brow crowned with laurel:—

> "O talk not to me of a name great in story,
> The days of our youth are the days of our glory;
> And the myrtle and ivy of sweet two-and-twenty
> Are worth all your laurels, tho' ever so plenty."

But Milton calls the berries of the myrtle "harsh and crude." The prettiest allusion to the myrtle in an English lyric occurs in Marlowe's "Passionate Shepherd," but here it almost seems that the exigencies of rhyme led to its introduction. The Shepherd invites his fair one: "Come live with me and be my Love," and among other inducements he offers:—

> "There will I make thee beds of roses
> And a thousand fragrant posies,
> A cap of flowers and a kirtle
> Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle."

Some attribute these lines to Shakespeare, who more than once pictures Venus and Adonis

love-making in a myrtle grove. Every one remembers, too, the beautiful lines beginning:—

> "As it fell upon a day
> In the merry month of May,
> Sitting in a pleasant shade
> Which a grove of myrtles made;
> Beasts did leap, and birds did sing,
> Trees did grow, and plants did spring;
> Everything did banish moan,
> Save the nightingale alone."

In Tennyson's "Sweet Little Eden" also:—

> "Fairily-delicate palaces shine
> Mixt with myrtle and clad with vine."

The Roman poets, more accustomed to the wild species of the myrtle—for it is found everywhere in the Mediterranean region—made better play with the dark green shrub. The Greeks held it sacred to Aphrodite, and crowned with it the victor in a bloodless fight. Myrtle bushes are usually low, but sometimes they attain, as in the Lebanon, to a height of twelve feet, thus qualifying for the description "tree." The most southern range of Lebanon is named "Jebel Rihan," the mound of myrtles. Myrtle flowers are white, the berries become blue-black or purple; the Talmud calls the colour black. The poets of Italy and Greece, however, fall far behind the Jewish in their fanciful treatment of the myrtle. And this is natural enough. The fragrant leaves of the evergreen add aroma to the entwined palm branch on the Feast of Tabernacles, and Hebrew poets of all ages have

used the myrtle as a type of sensuous sweetness. There is something Eastern in this. From myrtle a wine is made, and before the introduction of other spices like pepper, it was a favourite condiment in Oriental cookery. The Arab mother still stuffs her infant's couch with myrtle leaves, and bathes her babe's soft flesh in water distilled with myrtle oil. Graetz held that the verse in Psalm cxviii. usually rendered: "Fasten the festal victim with cords to the horns of the altar," ought to run "Bind ye garlands with myrtles unto the horns of the altar."

Whether this be right or not, the myrtle has been a favourite festive emblem with Jews. In Jehuda Halevi's love poems we often come across the myrtle. Myrtles were used in ancient Judea in the festoons above the bridal canopy, and Rabbis danced before the marriage procession bearing myrtle branches. When the custom grew up of crowning the Scrolls of the Pentateuch on the day of the Rejoicing of the Law, coronets of myrtle as well as of silver and gold were used. It was not till after the fourteenth century that the conventional metal "crown" for the Scrolls was added as a regular ornament. The person "called-up" to the Law was crowned with a myrtle wreath on Simchath Torah, the day of the Bridegroom of the Law. Though after the destruction of the Temple the bridal crowns were for awhile abolished, we find the custom reappearing in the Middle Ages. On the Sabbath after the wedding, the bridegroom

was crowned with myrtles. This accounts for the prominence of myrtles in Jehuda Halevi's songs, intended for liturgical use on such occasions. In one of these songs, he calls the happy young husband's joyous group of friends "his canopy of myrtles." When the bride's name happens to be Esther (Hadassa, or Myrtle), the poet luxuriates in the image:—

> "To Myrtle, myrtles waft a breeze,
> The pangs of love-sick love to ease."

It is said that the large Jewish betrothal rings, such as one sees at South Kensington, held sprigs of the same plant; and a keen-scented friend of mine has told me that he can still detect the faint odour of myrtle in one of the old rings. Verily, "Many waters cannot quench love." Perhaps equally imaginative are the pious Jews who reserve the myrtle from the Lulab for use in a dried condition, as "sweet-smelling spice" at the "habdala" on Saturday nights.

If we go back from the medieval Hebrew poets to the Midrash, quaint thoughts on the myrtle reward our search. All of these may also be found in the liturgy for the Feast of Tabernacles. The Midrash treats the myrtle not so much from the poetical as from the emblematic and moral side. Myrtle typifies Jacob and Leah, and of course Esther. "'Myrtle' which spreads fragrance as Esther spread grace; 'Myrtle' which fades not in winter, but is fresh always." Esther's

real name (as already mentioned) was "Myrtle." Zunz long ago pointed out that Jewesses in the Middle Ages were fond of borrowing their names from flowers. Flora, Myrrha, Blümchen, Rosa, Fiori, and others of the same style, often occur in early Jewish name-lists. To return to the Midrash on Myrtle: "Just as the myrtle has a sweet odour and a bitter taste, so Esther was sweet to Mordecai and bitter to Haman." (Elsewhere, the Rabbis speak of the myrtle as tasteless. They are thinking of different varieties, as may be seen from the Talmud *Succah*, folio 31b. The aromatic taste of the myrtle-berry may be understood when one remembers that the eucalyptus and clove belong to the same order as the myrtle.) "Bitter and sweet will join as dainties for His palate, who stood among the myrtles," sings Kalir, in allusion to this Midrash and to Zechariah i. 8, where the angel-warrior on a red horse stood in a glen of myrtles beneath Mount Olivet. The liturgy also uses the Midrashic parallel of the myrtle to the eye. The citron atones for heart-sins, the palm for stiff-backed pride, the willows for unholy speech, the myrtle for the lusts of the eye. The comparison to the eye is peculiarly apt. Not only does the elongated oval leaf of some species resemble the eye, but when held up to the light, it looks not unlike the iris. This effect is produced by the little oil-dots in the leaf. The Rabbis, like the Targum, explained the "boughs of thick trees" of Leviticus xxiii. 40,

to mean thick-leaved myrtles with clustering berries, though for ritual use too many berries were unlawful. Nehemiah (who, however, mentions both "thick trees" and "myrtles," viii. 15), and Josephus (Antiq., III. x. 4) bear witness that myrtles were associated with the festival of Tabernacles. The last-named authority informs us that the myrtles were carried in the hand, a fact not clearly stated, though implied, in Leviticus. It was because of this custom that Plutarch confused the Jewish feast with a Dionysian rite, for the devotees of Dionysus, or Bacchus, carried wands wreathed in ivy and vine leaves, topped with pine-cones. "Bearing wands wreathed with leaves, fair boughs and palms, after the manner of the feast of Tabernacles, they offered up hymns of thanksgiving," says the author of the Second Book of Maccabees (x. 6) of Judas and his men.

One other Talmudic thought must be mentioned, for it leads us back to Isaiah: "He who has learned and fails to teach is like a myrtle in the desert" (*Rosh Hashana*, fol. 23a),

> "Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
> And waste its fragrance on the desert air."

Isaiah, in his picture of the return from the Babylonian exile, paints the whole desert as a garden filled with joyous men. Nature becomes a worthier scene for the redemption. The desert is not merely dotted with oases, as Marti explains; it is transformed into one vast, well-

watered garden, filled with myrtles in place of thorns./ Thus the wilderness stretching between Babylon and Judea was to share in the renewal of the heavens and the earth. The change was to occur on a mighty scale, that all the earth might see and wonder. If the desert was so transfigured what (though the prophet does not add this) must be the glories of the new Canaan!

"The poor and needy seek water and there is none,
And their tongue faileth for thirst;
I the Lord will answer them,
I the God of Israel will not forsake them.
I will open rivers on the bare heights,
And fountains in the midst of the valleys;
I will make the wilderness a pool of water,
And the dry land flowing springs.
I will plant in the wilderness the cedar,
The acacia, the myrtle, and the oleaster,
I will set there the fir, the pine and the cypress;
That they may see and know and consider
That the hand of the Lord hath done this,
And the Holy One of Israel has created it."
(Isaiah xli. 17–20.)

And so again, when the trees wave their boughs and nature and man combine to sing a new song to the Lord,

"Ye shall go out with joy
And be led forth with peace,
The mountains shall break forth before you into singing,
And all the trees shall clap their hands.
Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree,
And instead of the brier the myrtle.
And it shall be to the Lord for a name,
An everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."
(lv. 12-13).

Yet we are told that the poets of the nineteenth century first taught men the lessons of nature. The ancient prophet felt the parallel between human moods and natural phenomena. Isaiah was not the least of those who experienced this analogy, and in the lines just cited the poetry of the myrtle reaches its noblest flight.

XVII

WILLOWS OF THE BROOK

It is antecedently improbable that a sad association was intended in the case of any of the emblems chosen for the Feast of Tabernacles, pre-eminently a season of joy. The "willows of the brook" were no less cheering than the palm, the myrtle, or the fruit of a goodly tree. The "weeping willows," which are beloved of the writers of dirges, and form a pensive refrain to poems like the "Lady of Shalott," have only this of melancholy about them, that they may form dark bowers and encircle black pools. The willows referred to in Scripture are mostly to be identified with poplars, such as still occur, rather extensively for a treeless land, in the lower part of the Jordan valley. The poplar, like the willow, grows best in damp soil.

> "Upon the willows in the midst thereof
> We hanged our harps."—Psalm cxxxvii. 2.

Here the reference may be to the willow proper (the *Salix Babylonica*), rather than to the *Populus Euphratica*. In Isaiah xliv. the willow is probably the "willow of the brook" which,

unlike the grasses and unflowering herbs that only spring up in full crop after the early rain in Syria, luxuriantly adorns the water-courses and the Dead Sea Valley.

"Fear not, O Jacob, My servant,
And thou Jeshurun, whom I have chosen;
For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty
And streams upon the dry ground:
I will pour My spirit upon thy seed,
And My blessing upon thine offspring,
And they shall spring up among the grass
As willows by the water-courses;
One shall say, I am the Lord's
And another shall call himself by the name of Jacob."
(Isaiah xliv. 2–4.)

Many writers render *Araba* in this passage also "poplar" and not "willow." The meaning is anyhow clear. It is the true Zionism that the prophet enunciates, a spiritual revival in which Israel wins the world to God, for the last two lines allude to the proselytes who are to enjoy the streams of God's love with and through Israel.

A probable identification (originally suggested by Schwarz), sees in the "Brook of the Willows" (Isaiah xv. 7), the Wadi-el-Ahsa, north of Kerak. This was the "Valley of the Waterpits," between Edom and Moab, where Elisha wrought his miracle (II. Kings iii. 16), of the rain, blood-red in the ditches, as the morning sun shone on the water. The prophet Ezekiel, too, had a fine reference to the willow, though it is doubtful whether he does not mean the "vine." It occurs

in the 17th chapter of Ezekiel, in the parable of the two eagles. The "Great Eagle" (Nebuchadnezzar) "came into Lebanon and took the highest branch of the cedar" (Jehoiachin). This was in 590 B.C. or thereabouts. Then the "Great Eagle" took of the seed of the land (Zedekiah), "placed it by great waters, and set it as a willow tree." It grew and "became a spreading vine," which treacherously bent its roots and branches towards another "Great Eagle" (Egypt) thus earning destruction at Nebuchadnezzar's hand. The figure is not clear. But *Zafzafa* (the word here rendered "willow") occurs nowhere else in Scripture, and though the similar Arabic word signifies "willow" it seems best to take it in Ezekiel in a generic sense as "plant." In Ezekiel xix. 10, we read of a "vine planted by the waters" and it may well be that *Zafzafa* is also a "vine." For why should the King of Babylon devote such pains to the cultivation of a willow and how would it transform itself into a vine?

The willow called *Zafzafa* differed from the *Araba;* the former was not lawful for use on Tabernacles. Its leaf was round and the edge serried, while the *Araba* had an elongated leaf with plain edges. The *Zafzafa* is thus rather a poplar than a willow in the Talmudic view, and Rashi (on Ezekiel xvii. 5) translates *Zafzafa* by *peuplier.* It grew in the valleys between the hills rather than by perennial streams, and thus did not fall within the category of "willows of the brook" (Leviticus xxxiii. 40).

On the first day of the festival a jubilant procession made its way to Mozah (a forty minutes' walk from Jerusalem), and masses of willows were gathered for the decoration of the altar. There are few willows now in Mozah, but the Arabs bring them to Jerusalem from Hebron and the South in baskets. The willows were used in Temple times for decorating the altar as well as for the bundle including the "four kinds." They were placed round the altar, piled so that the tops overhung and formed a kind of canopy, while the procession passed round. We have a survival of this custom in the use of the willows (*hoshaana*) on the seventh day of Succoth (*hoshaana rabbi*). That the beating or shaking of the leaves had a symbolical meaning cannot be doubted. The exact significance is, however, doubtful. It is usually held to typify the end of the harvest, the fall of the leaves from the trees and the approaching nakedness of winter. It may be so, but one might prefer to detect a more joyous implication, the willow being (as in Isaiah) an emblem of resurrection rather than of death and decay. Mr. Frazer would no doubt suggest a very different explanation.

It cannot be said that the willow was turned to an altogether fascinating use either by the Midrash, or by the authors of the Piyutim. The latter, indeed, are entirely dependent on the former, and show no originality. The "four species" typified man: the palm is the spine, the myrtle the eye, the willow the mouth, the

citron the heart. Again the willow typifies Rachel. Just as the willow withers before the three other kinds, so Rachel died before her sister. This is sufficiently melancholy. More neutral is the use of the two sprigs of willow as an emblem of the two scribes of the Sanhedrin. The willow, again, often typifies God, the rider on the *araboth*, in the heavens (Psalm lxviii.). The more hopeful note is also struck in comparing the willow to Joseph, "the brother bought as a slave," with a play perhaps on the word meaning "pledge." Joseph eventually saw the light.

The bearing of the willows is, according to another Piyut, to save Israel "from the flame of glowing coal." The allusion is to the saving efficacy of prayer. Best of all is the Midrashic idea that the four kinds exemplify God's use for all his creatures. The citron has odour (= good deeds) and taste (= Law); the palm (date) has no odour but has taste; the myrtle has odour but no taste, the willow has neither taste nor odour. God bids Israel bind them together, they help out the deficiencies of one another. So if Israel be but bound firmly in a fraternal whole, each individual has his place. The willow, poor destitute, shares, at all events, in the general good, even if it contribute nothing but its presence. "They also serve who only stand and wait."

XVIII

QUEEN ESTHER ON THE ENGLISH STAGE

No English play on the subject of Esther matches the romantic beauty of the drama which Racine wrote in 1689 for the nuns of St. Cyr. Nor is there an English Esther as genially artistic as the heroine of the nineteenth century tragedy which delighted the audiences of Grillparzer in Vienna. For all that, the English dramas recording the story of Ahasuerus and his Queen possess many features of unusual interest. Some of these plays may be dismissed with a bare mention. In Francis Kirkman's compilation, "The Wits, or Sport upon Sport," published in 1673, there is a feeble scene, consisting of forty-six lines in all, in which the fate of Haman is enacted. The author was probably Robert Cox, a prolific writer of drolls, but his "Ahasuerus and Esther" contains no wit whatever. Another very poor effort was Thomas Brereton's "Esther, or Faith Triumphant" (1715). This was an adaptation of Racine's play, but it was never performed on any stage. A like fate befell John Collett's "Esther, a

Sacred Drama" (1806), for Baker informs us that this play was also denied a public hearing. Cox's little interlude was no doubt meant to be introduced between the items of a longer programme, and it probably was often used on the stage.

For a really interesting English Esther we must go back to an earlier period. From an entry of Henslowe we learn that on June 3, 1594, a scriptural drama called "Hester and Ahasuerus" was performed in London by the Lord Chamberlain's players, a company which then included Shakespeare himself. It is not clear which play is alluded to by Henslowe, for there were more than one in vogue at the time of which he speaks. There is first the curious play printed in German in 1620, but obviously older, and certainly English in origin. This "Comedy of the Queen Esther and the Haughty Haman" was one of the plays which were produced in various parts of the Continent by a troupe of strolling actors who hailed from England and did so much to foster dramatic art abroad. If England now borrows so many of her plays from the foreigner, the debt was paid in advance in the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries. This particular Esther was performed in many Continental towns and before sundry German princes. It is an interesting literary phenomenon, for it belongs to a type representative of the great struggle made by the Morality play to resist the supremacy

of the newer form of drama, such as became dominant at the close of the Elizabethan period. Like another drama to be mentioned later on, this plays marks the transition from the ecclesiastical to the secular drama.

But its interest for Jews is even stronger than this. A notable character in the play is the Clown, called in this instance "Hans Knapkäse." This name establishes a link on the one hand with the Shakesperian fools, and on the other hand with the burlier buffoons beloved of Continental audiences and of Jews. The funny man of the Jewish jargon plays is simply lifted from such characters as Hans Cheeseboy. The clowns of many such plays were named from articles of food. Thus in Holland the clown was named Pickelherring (a familiar figure also in Jewish jargon plays), in France Jean Potage, in Italy Signor Maccaroni, in England Jack Pudding, and in Germany Hans Wurst. In this play performed by English actors the clown, Hans Knapkäse, has a "fat" part. No doubt the nature of the fun was suggested by the subject, for it will be remembered that Ahasuerus and Vashti could not agree as to the mutual relations (so far as obedience is concerned) between husband and wife. There is a really humorous scene between Hans and his good lady, in which blows are freely exchanged. Mrs. Hans comes off completely victorious, and Hans makes his exit, walking meekly behind her carrying her basket.

Hans, outside the domestic circle, is a truculent personage; he is the carpenter-hangman. He builds the gallows for Haman, and also acts as executioner. The play has no literary merit, but of course it does not fairly represent the English original; it rather looks like the mere skeleton of the play, jotted down, and filled in by the editor for German readers. But the play is amusing, and certainly is better than the one seen by the Abbé Coyer during a visit which he paid to Amsterdam in 1759. The Abbé reports that Ahasuerus did nothing in this play but eat and sleep. In each of the three acts he had a banquet, and as the curtain rose he was invariably asleep on his throne. Haman was a fearsome criminal, who expired on the gallows in melodramatic agony. We felt very sad, says the Abbé, but suddenly Mordecai brought our souls back to gaiety by dancing a merry Sarabande with two Rabbis in front of the gallows. The three dancers were muffled up in black tunics, and the performers resembled three coal-sacks moving in heavy cadence.

The comedy described above was performed by English actors in Germany certainly as late as 1626, for on July 3rd of that year it was given in Dresden. The Englishmen's Esther must have been very popular, for Hans Sachs' earlier play on the same subject could not hold out against it. But we have direct information that Valentin Andreae composed an Esther to rival the foreign importation. Our present

purpose must, however, carry us back to England itself, where we know of a very fine "Interlude" on the subject of Esther first published by William Pickering and Thomas Hacket, booksellers, in 1561.

The author of this beautiful work cannot be identified, but the "Godly Queene Hester" remains to sing his anonymous praises. Mr. Israel Gollancz kindly drew my attention to Grosart's reprint of this semi-Morality play; it has recently (1904) been again reprinted by W. W. Greg. In the German plays of the Reformation period, Esther was a favourite medium for hurling satire at the Pope and all his works, Haman's fall having clear attractions for those who wished no good to the Vatican. In the "Godly Queene Hester" a similar phenomenon presents itself, but the satire is social, not theological. First, here is an extract from the title-page (with modernised spelling):—

> "Come near virtuous matrons and women kind,
> Here may ye learn of Hester's duty,
> In all comeliness of virtue ye shall find
> How to behave yourselves in humility."

The names of the players:—

Prologue	Pride.
Assewerus	Adulation.
Three Gentlemen . . .	Ambition.
Aman (= Haman) . . .	Hardy dardy.
Mardocheus	A Jew.
Hester	Arbona.
Pursuivant	Scribe.

This list of characters consists partly of real persons, partly of personifications—thus the play is an intermediate stage between the Morality and the drama proper. The satiric touches to which I have already referred are hurled at Haman, but they are directed in truth against the Ministers of Henry VIII. Once, as Grosart points out, the author forgets himself, and allows Ambition angrily to lament that the country, despite excessive taxation, is not prepared for war with France or Scotland! There is good reason for holding that the dramatist wrote between 1525–29, and designed his play as a somewhat fierce attack on Cardinal Wolsey. The audience must have seen that the gibes at Haman (Aman) were meant for the great Court circles of their own day. There is one curiosity to which I must draw special attention. Pride and Adulation both make their wills, and leave all their evil qualities as a bequest to Haman. Now, in 1703, there was printed in Hebrew a burlesque Will of Haman, in which he bade his children to abstain from giving charity, because it is not profitable, and to avoid robbing the poor because they possess nothing worth stealing. May we find the origin of this Hebrew fancy in the play now before us? Space prevents me from lingering over the many beauties of this "Godly Queene Hester," But there are three things that must be said. Mr. Grosart holds that though Hester fills the title rôle, she sinks into insignificance in the

play itself. This is hardly the case. The dramatist gives a spirited picture of womanhood in his Hester. As Grosart himself points out Hester reminds one of Lady Jane Grey. This is Mordecai's description of her :—

> "A pearl undefiled, and of conscience clear,
> Sober, sad, gentle, meek and demure,
> In learning and literature profoundly seen
> In wisdom, eke semblant to Saba the Queen."

And in several passages Hester is the type of a noble ideal. My second point relates to Hardy-dardy, the fool of the play. The words "Hardy-dardy" are simply a reduplication of "hardy," meaning a rash fellow, a dare-devil. In his "wise unwisdom and uncanny rashness of speech" Hardy-dardy recalls the fools of Shakespeare. His smart tongue and ready phrase are quite Shakesperian. It would be strange did it prove, as Mr. Grosart hints, that Shakespeare derived some of his inspiration from this delightful interlude. My third point is this. In the Jewish Purim plays, Haman, while he is not by any means whitewashed, is nevertheless rather the object of ridicule than of vindictiveness. But in the English "Interlude" Haman is an unmitigated villain. As Mr. Greg well says, it is he who is the incarnation of all the vices, for though Pride, Adulation, and Ambition appear in person on the scene, it is to Haman and not to them that these vices belong. They are milk-and-water rogues compared to him.

There is one other English presentation of

Esther to which a few lines must be devoted. On Handel's birthday (February 23rd) in 1732, the Esther Oratorio was performed for the first time by the children of the Chapel Royal, at the house of their leader, Bernard Gates, in Westminster. The libretto owed something to Alexander Pope and to Arbuthnot, but their handiwork is disfigured by the alterations and additions made by Humphreys. The words are not, of course, wanting in charm, but there is little of Pope's grace or of Arbuthnot's wit to be detected. The lyrics are more or less derived from Racine. The Oratorio seems to have been at once successful, for in the same year it was performed at a subscription concert at the "Crown and Anchor" Tavern and again at the room in Villiers Street. The performers were very notable people. Gates himself was eccentric enough, but the people of most interest to us are the boys who sang the chief parts. First there was Beard, famous afterwards as a vocalist and actor, and as the manager of the Covent Garden Theatre. Charles Dibdin wrote that "taken altogether, Beard is the best English singer . . . his voice is sound and male, powerful, flexible, and extensive." Handel especially composed for Beard some of his finest tenor parts, among others those in "Israel in Egypt," the "Messiah," and "Judas Maccabæus." The part of Esther was sung in 1732 by the boy John Randall, who subsequently became Professor of Music at Cambridge University.

XIX

HANS SACHS' "ESTHER."

NUREMBERG was aglow with enthusiasm in 1894 in celebration of the 400th anniversary of Hans Sachs' birth. In his native city some of his homely dramas were enacted, and the spectators, among whom I was fortunate enough to find myself, could readily understand the hold which the shoemaker and poet had won on the hearts of his contemporaries. There is no character-drawing, no analysis of motives in Hans Sachs' plays. But there is humour and movement, and, above all, good morals. In his secular dialogues he delineates the common life of his day, and though the humour is rough it is hearty, and the satire if simple is sincere. He allowed less scope to his fancy in his Shrove Tuesday dramas, but his vividness, his medieval combination of buffoonery with reverence, imparted to the sacred or mystery plays a new lease of life towards the middle of the sixteenth century, not only in Germany, but all over Europe.

Hans Sachs wrote two dramas on the subject of Esther. Of the version which appeared in 1559, nothing will be said on the present

occasion. But his earlier "Esther," written in 1536, is, as far as I know, the oldest complete dramatisation of the biblical story, for the English "Interlude," though perhaps a few years earlier, is not a complete play. I cannot quite agree with Schwarz that the play shows poor dramatic technique. Sachs throughout fits his material to the resources of his stage. Thus, he skilfully omits the second banquet given by Queen Esther, he makes no attempt to represent Mordecai's triumph, and the negotiations between Esther and Mordecai on the action to be pursued by the former, at the critical moment of Haman's plot, are cleverly contrived as occurring behind the scenes. But it must be confessed that the material is clumsily divided. There are three Acts to the play, with about 160, 220, and 390 lines respectively. Schwarz, again, overstates the slavish fidelity of Sachs to his scriptural original. Certainly the biblical narrative is closely followed, but several of the *dramatis personæ* have no counterpart in the Bible. Here it is interesting to note that Sachs' list of the characters appended to the play does not quite correspond with the characters as they appear in the body of the drama. The point, however, is that of his thirteen characters some have an unauthorised prominence, while two are altogether without biblical warrant. These are the Herald and the Fool. Sachs always begins and ends his sacred plays with a Herald or some such character. In his "Adam and

Eve," a Cherub appears in the Herald's place. In his "Esther," the Herald enters and bows, welcomes Ahasuerus' guests, then exits to introduce the King himself. At the close, the same Herald delivers a long summary of the incidents which have been portrayed, and passes a moral judgment on them all. Wives must learn from Vashti's fate that it is dangerous to defy their husbands; Esther is a model of modesty and sweetness; Haman, a fearful warning against deceit and cunning; Mordecai, a type of the faithful God-fearer; the King, of the virtue of justice.

> "Als denn wirt uns Got auch gross machen.
> Das unser ehr grun, blu und wachs,
> Das wunschet zu Nurnberg Hans Sachs."

The play is written throughout in rhymed couplets.

More interesting still is the Fool. He has some of the usual qualities of the buffoons of the "Fastnacht," or Carnival plays (by the way Hans Sachs describes Purim as a Jewish "Fastnacht"). The Fool has a great love for eating and drinking, just as his prototypes in the Shrove Tuesday mysteries. In Sachs' "Esther" the Fool is always hovering round the royal table, and when Esther invites the King and Haman to a feast the Fool audibly smacks his lips in anticipation of the good things coming, which Esther prepares with her own hands. Again Sachs' Fool is greedy and grasp-

ing, after the wont of his class. When the King bestows on Esther the property of Haman, the Fool interposes with a claim for a share in the spoil. Give me, he cries, Haman's red riding boots, that I may strut in them on feast days, and rouse the envy of the poor fellows who have no such leggings. The Fool, again, shows very little generosity of feeling. When Haman is down and has to conduct Mordecai's triumph the Fool taunts him unmercifully; when finally the fallen favourite is led off to the gallows, the Fool heads the procession with unmannerly jeers. This is a blot not only on the play but on the poet. But, for all this, the Fool of Hans Sachs is unlike those of the common "Fastnacht" plays. Like Shakespeare's Clowns, under a mask of folly he wears a heart of wisdom. He warns the King solemnly of the futility of yielding to Haman's cruel proposals, he protests wisely and well. His wit has a very biting effectiveness, and he never spares his royal master.

> "Weisst nit? man jach vor alten zeitten,
> Ein geher man solt esel reyten."

Thus, in many important points, Hans Sachs' "Esther" departs from the biblical original. The same is the case in details, some of which have been already indicated. At Ahasuerus' feast there are knightly sports. At table, the King boasts of his wealth and the beauty of Vashti, and the Major-domo, who is named

Amnon, assents with a flattering smile—an original touch of the dramatist's. The Fool tells the King that Vashti will not come, for, says he, when women get together at table they become so refractory that not even a pear-stalk will they spare for their husbands. The King consults two instead of seven councillors. A display of brides is made throughout the kingdom, and Mordecai introduces Esther to the Chamberlain. He bids her, in prophetic terms, unknown to Scripture at this point, to conceal her Jewish origin, for who knows what God may intend from her exaltation? When the King falls in love with her, Esther at first modestly declines the crown as too honourable a distinction. She soon renders her husband signal service, by reporting the plot of Theresh and Bigthan. In her report she describes Mordecai as her relative, an un-biblical feature. Hans Sachs, strangely oblivious of this interpolation, subsequently follows the Bible in making the revelation of the relationship at the Queen's banquet. Haman's plot against the whole Jewish people is based by Sachs not merely on the biblical motive of personal revenge, but also on Haman's national rancour against the descendants of the enemies of his race—the Amalekites. Instead of ten thousand talents, Haman offers the King ten hundredweights of silver as a bribe. When Esther presents herself before the King, who is surrounded by his court, she excuses her delay

in stating her petition till the banquet on the plea that the King's gracious reception of her had overcome her too much to permit of further speech. Haman resolves to build the gallows on his own initiative; he is not prompted by his wife as in the Scripture. The play ends (except for the Herald's speech), with a summons to a dance.

> "Mach auff, spielman, ein zuchting reyen,
> Auff dass wir uns alle erfrewen."

Despite these many deviations, Schwarz is so far right that Hans Sachs' "Esther" is, on the whole, nothing but a dramatisation of the Bible story. The discrepancies are indeed set out by Schwarz himself, in his able essay on "The Esther Dramas of the Reformation Era," an essay to which I am much indebted. Hans Sachs' work, taken altogether, produces a very pleasing effect on the reader. It is destitute of the lyric beauty of Racine, but it is truer to human nature. There is no hidden motive in it. It is an attack neither on the Jews nor on the Pope. Several Esther dramas, in Latin and German, were satires on Roman Catholicism. But Hans Sachs, though an ardent admirer of Luther, does not here use Esther as a controversial weapon in aid of "the Wittenberg Nightingale." The simplicity and homeliness of the Nuremberg shoemaker long made Hans Sachs unpalatable to the German lovers of "learned" poetry. But since Goethe re-dis-

covered him, his repute has gone on growing, until it is now perhaps higher than is just. But his plays, of one class of which "Esther" may be taken as a type, are pure and vivid, full of a charm imparted by the most honest and direct means.

XX

THE SHOFAR

"SHALL the trumpet (Shofar) be blown in a city and the people not be afraid?" (Amos iii. 6).

The Shofar, or Ram's-horn, is one of the most primitive of musical instruments. Ancient Israel may have adopted the lyre and cittern from Greece, though there is good reason to think that the Jews were under no such obligations to foreign influences in music as they were in some other branches of art, such as architecture. At all events the Shofar was a native instrument. At first it had no exclusively religious associations, such as the announcement of the Jubilee and the approach of the Ark, but was blown on secular occasions as well on royal accessions, in assemblies, for signals in battle, by watchmen on the towers. The Shofar, however, has been appropriated by the Synagogue for solemn uses on the New Year and on some other days associated with the penitential season. It is still the only musical instrument heard within the walls of a large majority of Jewish places of worship.

Such appropriation is a natural evolution. We see a somewhat similar process in the case

of the "fringes" on the *tallith*. The *tallith* was originally a four-cornered, toga-like outer garment ordinarily worn in the East. Being no longer used as part of the daily costume, the *tallith* was retained as a vestment during prayer. Ecclesiastical vestments are often mere survivals of ancient fashions. The case of the Shofar is not quite parallel, for the Bible specifically ordains the blowing of the Shofar on the festival now more commonly known as the autumnal New Year.

We no longer retain in England one of the most effective of Synagogue rites, though in some parts of the Continent the rite still holds. The congregation stands at silent worship during the long *Mussaf* prayer on the New Year. Thrice the stillness is broken by the piercing blasts of the Shofar. The effect is indescribably weird.

But even without this aid to the solemnity, the Shofar, as we are accustomed to it in this country, is arrestive enough. Its shrill, unmelodious notes resemble nothing of our common music. It is a harsh intruder on the light melodies which most of us love. Just such an impression must Amos have made on the soft livers of Samaria and Jerusalem. His wild looks and uncouth bearing must have been as repulsive to them as their unrighteous ease in Zion was odious to him. As Amaziah, the court priest, complained of Amos, "the land cannot bear all his words," and the shepherd prophet

was thrust back to his sycomores. But Israel was not all court priest, and though Amos may have failed to make an immediate impression, he began the process of creating that serious element in the people which realised in its life the prophetic ideals. The prophet never wins many hearers at once. As rare as the prophetic gift itself is the gift of understanding a prophet's message. But from Amos until the destruction of the first Temple, there was no break in the line of prophets to lift up their voice like the Shofar and tell their people their sin. And a remnant of Israel was always ready to listen. It was no vain boast that a Psalmist uttered some five centuries later:—

> "All this is come upon us:
> Yet have we not forgotten Thee,
> Neither have we dealt falsely in Thy covenant."

Israel's long-drawn out loyalty, Israel's devotion to God, persistent despite temporary lapses, is the truest comment on this text.

Reverting to the metaphor used by Amos, the trumpet-call to a threatened city, we find in it the idea which the Synagogue now most closely connects with the Shofar on the New Year. There are—as the meditation ascribed to Saadiah shows—other ideas in plenty: the Creation, the Binding of Isaac, the Revelation on Sinai, the Proclamation of God's Kingship, the final Day of Judgment, the Resurrection, and the Messianic Redemption. All these sublime thoughts are asso-

ciated in Scripture with the Shofar, and find their due place in the liturgy of the New Year. But Maimonides rightly throws chief stress on the idea, "Ye sleepers, awake!" In his ear the Shofar sounds the call to seriousness. "Leave vanities, turn to realities." You cannot trip through life to dance music. Amid the dainty trills of the flutes, the Shofar sounds harsh alarm for war. It is a moment for heroism. Many a man shows himself possessed of unsuspected courage when a sudden danger summons him to defend hearth and home. The same courage is needed for defending the citadel of God, which enshrines the earnest purposes of life, for confronting the stern realities which the prophets of Israel confronted, and which made them sometimes look sourly on life's gaieties and lightheartedness.

"He heard the sound of the Shofar and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him; whereas if he had taken warning he should have delivered his soul" (Ezekiel xxxiii. 5). Woe to the city that hears the signal and remains unmoved, lulled to that security which is mortals' chiefest enemy by the comfortable cry, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace."

> "I am pained at my heart;
> My heart is disquieted within me;
> I cannot hold my peace.
> For thou hast heard, O my soul, the Shofar,
> The alarm of war."

When Jeremiah thus exclaimed, it was not so much because he was himself afraid. He was

restive because he could not communicate the contagion of his fear. "I set watchmen over you, saying, Hearken to the sound of the Shofar; but they said, We will not hearken." Jeremiah's contemporaries thought his politics unpatriotic because he prophesied disaster. They would not respond to his alarms. And so Jerusalem had to fall into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar. So, too, must the Zion of our modern hope fall if we be deaf when the Shofar summons us to repair the breaches in our wall, to set right the wrongs which our policy of drift has connived at if not created. "Ye sleepers, awake!"

"Bring me back in penitence to Thee, but not, O Lord, by means of chastisement." Thus prayed a Rabbi of old. Happy the man who can find his way back to God by a less painful path than the road of chastisement. But happy he, too, whom the Lord chastiseth into penitence. Unhappy he who is chastised in vain, who learns nothing from his trials, who hears the danger signal but is not afraid, or fears for an instant and then forgets, who

> "Being thus frighted, swears a prayer or two
> And sleeps again."

The Shofar must make us afraid, it must impose on us the lacking emotions of awe before the mystery of life, of reverence before the majesty of God. "I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me for ever;

for the good of them and their children after them." Not a fear that makes us shrink, but a fear that makes us serious; the fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom for us and for our children after us.

XXI

HANUCAH IN OLDEN TIMES

Feasts in the Middle Ages wore a strong family likeness to one another. The forms of enjoyment were few, and taste was forced into a limited number of channels. But there was some differentiation. There were three elements in joy, each of which had a local habitation of its own: in the synagogue, in the public hall, and in the home. The three were always associated, but all the features were not equally pronounced. Each of the minor feasts chose one element as its characteristic. The Rejoicing of the Law was a synagogue function, Purim filled the streets and the Communal Hall, Hanucah held the home as its peculiar scene.

Women made holiday on the Feast of Light, some for eight days, some — who regarded a week's holiday as an unpardonable excess — only rested on the first and the last days of the feast, but all ceased their usual occupations at eventide, while the lights were burning. At an earlier period the illuminations were more public. I am not alluding merely to the illumination in synagogue, which has remained a never interrupted rite. But in the Middle

Ages, when Jews lived in special quarters of the town, the lamps were often set outside the doors or at the windows. In Venice the Jews would embark on gondolas and row through their district, greeting each illuminated house with a benediction and a merry Hebrew chorus. Venice and its bridges were an eternal source both of fun and of trial. For the "Cohanim" were placed in a sorry plight when a death occurred. The bridges joined the whole Jewish quarter, and it was held by many that the presence of a corpse in any one house "defiled" all houses. Hence the "Priests" were forced to pass many a night in the open air, in snow or rain, spanning Venice with a dolorous "Bridge of Sighs."

But it early became the rule to reserve the Hanucah lights for the interior of the house. We can easily see that an external lamp would invite extinction. The Gaonim already felt it necessary to permit Jews to forego the duty of "publishing the miracle" and light their rooms rather than their streets. Nay, the practice may be traced even further back, to early Roman days. It is obvious that this transference helped to make Hanucah a domestic celebration. But it led to a further development of great interest in the history of Art. Illumination was common to many medieval ceremonies. By the beginning of the fourteenth century, Jews had acquired the habit of placing family candles in the synagogue, in memory of

the dead, on the Day of Atonement. On every festival it was customary in some parts to bear a huge torch in front of the Scroll of the Law. There were, further, societies of young men who devoted themselves to illuminating the synagogue on all appropriate occasions. Or, again, in Germany, in the fourteenth century, at a Berith Milah, candles were always lit. Maharil tells us of a case of the initiation of twin boys in Mayence, on which occasion "they lit twenty-four small candles and two great ones," which, he adds, "were double the usual number."

Naturally the feast of Hanucah had distinctive traits, but the prevalence of illumination at other times helped to spur on the medieval Jews to give the Hanucah lights a special prestige. If the date given in the Strauss Catalogue be accurate, then as early as the twelfth century goldsmiths applied their nascent feeling for art to the construction of ornate Hanucah lamps. One of that date seems to have been found at Lyons in the excavations of the old Jewish quarter. The metal used is bronze, and the shape of the lamp is triangular, like the *fronton* of the Roman Church. On this the lamps lie flat, but it was more usual, until the eighteenth century, to construct the lamp with eight upright stems or branches, with another extra stem to bear the "Shamash" or attendant light. It may be well to remind readers of the purpose served by this extra candle or oil-flame. First, it was there to serve as the "lighter," and

thus obviate the necessity of kindling one light from another, an act forbidden by some ancient authorities. But its chief function was to provide a light that might be "used." If the illumination was indoors, it would scarcely be possible that the family should refrain from seeing, and perchance reading, by the aid of the Hanucah lamps. Yet this was opposed to the ritual law. Hence, the "Shamash" was placed higher than the rest of the lights, or in a conspicuous position at the side, certainly not in the same line. This gave a fresh opportunity to the artist. In another of the Strauss specimens, the lamp, standing on lions and bearing the figures of heroes and many symbolical devices, is surmounted by Judas the Maccabee; in his right hand he holds a sword, and in his left he bears the head of the vanquished Lysias. Copper, gold, silver, bronze, were all employed in these lamps. The Renaissance clearly had some influence on Jewish taste. For, besides the usual Hebraic emblems, such as the two tables of stone, cherubs, several architectural reminiscences of the Temple, vines and bells, flowers and pomegranates, lions and eagles, the widow's cruse of oil, the seven-branched candelabrum, all for the most part in relief—besides these and the favourite grotesques beloved of Jewish art, there is an occasional specimen of an altogether different kind. One of the Strauss lamps bears classical mythological emblems, the centre being adorned with a Medusa head!

Surely, the Renaissance penetrated fitfully even into the Ghettos.

Such costly works of art were not, as might be thought, the rare property of the rich. That they were common is clear from the very large number of extant specimens in various collections. Moreover, as the domesticity of Hanucah grew, the lamp became a prized ornament of many homes. An early eighteenth-century authority, who is the spokesman of the ordinary middle-class Jew of his day, insists that every one should possess a silver Hanucah lamp, or at least the "Shamash" should be of precious metal. Of course, the very poor must have contented themselves with less expensive ware. Some, indeed, used egg-shells, perhaps because of the mention of egg-shells in the Mishnah dealing with the Sabbath lamp, or in memory of the eight eggs which a Rabbi flung into the air on the feast of the "Water-drawing" at Tabernacles. Although a distinction was drawn between the biblical and the post-biblical feasts, still Jews transferred the customs of one class to the other. At first, indeed, Hanucah was observed exactly like Tabernacles. The Second Book of the Maccabees tells us that, on Hanucah, booths were built and palm-branches borne, the Hallel was sung, and in other respects, such as the Reading of the Law, the parallel was, and is still, maintained. So, too, in the choice of haftaras for the feast, the idea is uppermost that Hanucah, like Tabernacles, was

a "Period of Joy." Some modern Jews are indignant that in the formula for lighting the Hanucah lamps, a phrase is used implying that "God commanded" the illumination of Jewish houses at the Maccabean festival. A medieval Italian Rabbi was once asked the same question. His answer shows that a good deal of common sense lies in the responses of Talmudists. "I notice," he said, "that an order has just been issued by *His Grace the Duke*; but the Duke did not issue it at all." It may safely be said that those Jews who can see a divine authority for Purim and only a human sanction for Hanucah are suffering from a serious attack of spiritual twist.

The social concomitants of the Feast of Lights were, like the feast itself, entirely domestic. Even the special foods show this. Cheese and milk foods predominated, for Judith, whose truculent heroism was associated with Hanucah, had, in the Jewish version of the tale, carried cheese in her wallet when on her perilous visit to Holofernes. Other foods were garlic, and a kind of stew called in the Orient *Ssfing*, restricted to the first day. The evening meal took place while the lights brightened the home, or soon after the allotted half-hour had elapsed. Spirited hymns and table songs were specially written, among others by Ibn Ezra himself, for the occasion. The father then assembled his children and told them the story of the Maccabean struggle. Drinking was rare, but an extra

glass was neither forbidden nor rejected. The hymns were most prolonged on the eighth night, for the children were encouraged to save up the unburnt remnants of oil from night to night and make a long holocaust on the final evening, while psalms and songs resounded. These songs had their special Hanucah tunes in the eighteenth century, and no doubt the home tended greatly to foster that Chazanuth which we wrongly identify entirely with the synagogue. Every one remembers how Bernstein, in his charming novel, *Vögele der Maggid,* represents Golde as repeating at home all the Chazan's trills and twirls. The home, too, replaced in a sense the synagogue on Hanucah in another function. As I have shown elsewhere, house to house begging was discouraged by the medieval Jews. But at Hanucah the practice was allowed, for the feast was a domestic rite in which the poor might participate by going round collecting doles from every household. Of course, Hanucah too was the time for giving presents to teachers: it is even probable that their chief income was derived from the Hanucah gifts. I say little here about the synagogue rites on Hanucah, for they are the same now as in the past. But as Hanucah was essentially a woman's feast, certain other points must be added. This was a favourite period for the exchange of gifts between the father of a betrothed maiden and the bridegroom elect. I think it may be worth while, as showing

several things, among them the licence allowed to women on Hanucah, to quote the 13th Article of the Statutes of the Jewish congregation at Avignon. The following regulation is dated 1779:—

"Women and servants shall not carry nor accompany to the door of the men's synagogue children under the age of four years old, except at the moment of the sale of the Mitsvoth. In the latter case, the said children shall be made to quit immediately before the reading of the Pentateuch; but they may again come in to join the procession when the Scroll is taken back to the Ark. They may also come during the Blessings of the Cohanim. Should any child be brought in at any other time by women, the father of the child shall pay a fine of 20 livres. *Nevertheless, women may enter the synagogue on all the eight nights of Hanucah.*"

The other amusements of the feast were all domestic in essence. There were no dramas for Hanucah until very modern times, and these later Hanucah plays do not emanate from Russia, but from Germany and, strange to tell, from America. Acting has only recently become a home pastime. With the Jew, his performances of plays were in the Communal Hall on Purim and at weddings, not in the home. Hence, I take it, the absence of dramas from the Hanucah delights. Riddles, acrostics, arithmetical puzzles, gematrias, extravagant enigmas called *Ketowes*, to which the number

forty-four—the total of the lights burned during the whole eight days—was the answer, these and similar mild joys reveal that the keynote of the feast was domestic calm and family quietude. In the fifteenth century, however, the game of cards invaded the home, and almost superseded all other amusements with Jews as it did with Christians. In many communal enactments forbidding the fascinating game as an ordinary thing, Hanucah was almost invariably placed among the permitted times. A curious extension was given to this licence in the eighteenth century, for many argued that the freedom to play cards on Hanucah endured for eight working days, and that the two Sabbaths which sometimes intervene must be deducted. The addition of two days was made every year, even when there was but a single Sabbath during the feast. Schudt tells us that the chief Hanucah card games were *loo* and *à l'ombre*. He adds that many Christians were scandalised at this card-playing, as Hanucah often comes near Christmas, just as Purim, the other card-playing period, coincided roughly with the Passion. In England this objection would not have been felt, for at the University of Cambridge the students in Milton's time were expressly permitted to play cards on Christmas. Jews, in point of fact, were often very deferential to Christmas. They sent presents to Christian friends on that festival, and, a generation ago, the Smyrna Jews went on Christmas day to church to escort a popular

Consul. Far earlier, two centuries back, in Venice, Jews visited their Gentile friends at Christmas and sang and played with them to help them to make merry.

Though cards tended to monopolise the fair field of recreation, two other games have held their own on Hanucah. With one, the arithmetical riddles, or *Ketowes*, I have already dealt. The other was the Teetotum, or Trendel, as it is called abroad. With what delight did Dukes (then in London) write to Leopold Löw at Szegedin, under the date September, 1864: "I have seen a toy in London called a Teetotum. It is exactly like a Hanucah Trendel, with English letters instead of Hebrew on it. But why it is called by its peculiar name no one can tell me." Of course, the name comes from the letter T, which is inscribed on one of the four sides of the toy: thus "T Totum," or *T, takes all.* This reminds me of the noted Latin epigram, addressed by the boy to the twirling Teetotum: "Te totum amo, amo te, Teetotum."

It is a very ancient game, known to the Greeks and Romans. But why was it specially favoured on Hanucah? No answer has ever been given to this natural question. It may be that the Teetotum was regarded as a very innocent form of gambling, if that be not altogether too harsh a word to use. Many pious people never played cards or any other game of chance, but they may have felt that so simple a game as this was lawful enough. But I can now

supplement this with a new suggestion. The Teetotum is still in parts of Ireland the chief indoor recreation of the peasantry at Christmas-tide. Now it is well known that such games seldom change their seasons. I should not wonder if the Teetotum was a favourite toy elsewhere at Christmas. If so, the Jews may have transferred it to Hanucah. For they never invented their own games, except those of the intellectual species, such as Hanucah *Ketowes*. The *Ketowes* even gave rise to a folk proverb: "Zechus Owes, Kein Ketowes," *i.e.*, I suppose, the merit of the fathers is not the solution of life's riddle. Indeed, the moral of Hanucah is, after all, that Judaism must rely on present effort by the children as well as on the past merits of their sires, if it is to remain in any true sense a "Feast of Light."

XXII

THE HALLEL

Driven from Russia by a local outbreak of intolerance, a certain Jew arrived in London just before the Passover of 1840. A scholar of the old-fashioned type, he also belonged to a branch of the Chassidim, whose Judaism is tinged with emotion, though it is not necessarily based (as is sometimes supposed) on ignorance. Our immigrant, who afterwards attained to a position of some eminence in the Anglo-Jewish community, inquired into the rituals prevalent in the various London synagogues, and found only one (Bevis Marks) in which the Hallel (Psalms cxiii.–cxviii.) figured as part of the service for the Passover eve. The Hallel was for him a significant factor in the religious life. Hence he attached himself to the above-named Sephardic congregation without hesitation and with what proved lifelong loyalty.

The Hallel has, no doubt, associations with the Passover. The group of six Psalms which compose it is known in Rabbinical sources as "the Egyptian Hallel." The second Psalm of the group (Psalm cxiv.)—"an exquisite little poem . . . for perfection of form and dramatic vivid-

ness almost if not quite unrivalled in the Psalter" (Kirkpatrick)—presents the great memory of the Exodus from Egypt, and uses it not as a memory but as an encouragement.

> "When Israel went out of Egypt,
> The house of Jacob from a people of strange tongue,
> Judah became His sanctuary,
> And Israel His dominion.
>
> The sea saw, and fled:
> The Jordan turned backwards.
> The mountains skipped like rams,
> The little hills like lambs."

Then with that poetic vision in which present and past are interwoven, the Psalmist asks:—

> "What aileth thee, thou sea, that thou fleest?
> Thou Jordan, that thou turnest back?
> Ye mountains, that ye skip like rams?
> Ye little hills like young sheep?"

The answer to these rhetorical questions displays inimitable art. God's wondrous deeds in the past are made the prelude to the author's sense of the same divine mercy in the present. Hence the answer is no longer a direct reference to history. Earth feels God's presence now as then; earth, whose "stubborn elements" are transformed now as then into means of sustenance and salvation.

> "Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord,
> At the presence of the God of Jacob;
> Who turneth the rock into a pool of water,
> The flint into a springing well."

The providence which we recognise is this continuous providence; the miracles that move us are those marvels of a far-off time which, as the Synagogue liturgy beautifully puts it, "renew themselves day by day." When the "special providence" passes over into the general, the perennial God is in His heaven and all is right with the world.

This idea, which most modern expositors read into the structure of the Psalm, was also read into it by the Rabbis. "Reading into" a biblical passage is sometimes fraught with mischief; here, however, the result is all gain. Why did Israel leave Egypt? asks the Rabbi; and thinking of the first lines of the quotation made above, he answers, For the sake of the Law which Israel was destined to receive. There is a chain binding events. So, with more daring, the latter Psalms in the group were interpreted by some Rabbis of the future Redemption, of the Messianic age. In Psalm cxv. we have a rather gloomy picture of the grave, of Sheol, the underworld, here termed "silence"; where "the dead praise not God, nor any that go down into silence." It is extraordinary how blind we are to the greatness of the Psalter. It is (or ought to be) easy enough for us to realise the possibility of the soul's communion with God when it is a commonplace of our Judaism to regard the soul as an immortal emanation from the divine soul. But to arrive at such a possibility while holding human life as temporary and mortal—the human soul

living out its full life in bodily coils—here was a grand effort of spiritual force to which what other name can we give than inspiration? When this Psalm was written, in the second century B.C., Israel was in the throes of a great transformation. The immortality of the soul was a doctrine which was just finding acceptance in Judaism under Hellenic influence. But the idea was so compatible with Judaism, was so spirit of its spirit, that once adopted it was indissolubly bound up with the faith. It is possible that we witness the very transition in the Hallel itself. Contrasted with the "silence" of Sheol of Psalm cxv., it it hard to resist the suggestion that in Psalm cxvi. the sacred singer has in his mind the life which ends not in Sheol, but begins there.

> "Return unto thy rest, O my soul!
> For the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.
>
> For Thou hast delivered my soul from death,
> Mine eyes from tears, my soul from death.
>
> I will walk before the Lord,
> In the land of the living."

To interpret thus is perhaps to "read in" what is not there; to interpret otherwise may be to "read out" what *is* there.

Mention has been made of the structure of the Hallel, and something more must be said on the subject. For just as the first Psalms of the group point to thanksgiving, so does the last of the six. Psalm cxviii. is the very climax of

jubilant praise. Based on an old refrain, as old as the heart and voice of Judaism,

> "O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good:
> For His lovingkindness endureth for ever,"

the Psalm calls upon assembled Israel, laymen and priests, to pour forth their joyous praise. It is clearly a Dedication hymn; we can hear the procession moving on its way to the restored, reconsecrated Temple. Solos by the leader, refrains by responsive choirs, some stanzas thrown antiphonally from those within to those without the sacred precincts, until the gates of righteousness are opened and the godly host enters. Every line, every phrase, has its associations stirring or pathetic. To read it is a liberal education in religion; to read it as it should be, and happily is read, in the Synagogue, is religion itself. For the Temple has not been reached by a primrose path of dalliance. Israel has been through the valley. Humiliation, strife, a terrible conflict, have preceded victory. Martyrs have fallen, but "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints"—a text which has enabled many a hero to die for an ideal, fearless of man when God was on his side.

> "I called upon the Lord in straits,
> The Lord answered me with enlargement.
> The Lord is on my side; I will not fear:
> What can man do unto me?"

Here speaks the Jewish soldier, the Maccabean warrior, with high praises of God in his mouth

and a two-edged sword in his hand, stern to win the fight, and reluctant to claim the glory of it, sinking self in the cause, man in God.

> "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us,
> But unto Thy name give glory,
> For the sake of Thy love and Thy truth."

It is very probable that this whole 118th Psalm is Maccabean in date. It certainly echoes the ideals of that heroic age; reproduces its fierce energy, its lowly trust. "God is Lord, and hath given us light," may even point to the Hanucah illuminations. But it is not on small points such as this that one rests the belief in the Maccabean origin of the Psalm. "It breathes the very spirit of Judas, the hero, even as it celebrates his dedication of the purified Temple: that is the 'Day which the Lord hath made,' and Israel is the 'corner-stone'" (Montefiore).

When Judas Maccabeus rededicated the Temple, we are told, the Jews celebrated a feast after the model of Tabernacles. The connection between the Hallel and Tabernacles is quite obvious, as has been incidentally shown in some of the earlier of these "Studies." From the Hallel were derived the "Hosannas," the festal cry with which the priests encircled the place of burnt-offering as they bound the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar. And year by year, as the Feast of Ingathering comes round, and the autumn harvest has fulfilled the hopes of spring; when the fruition of Tabernacles has

followed the promise of the Passover; when, after a long-drawn-out struggle with the lower self in the solemn penitential period, the higher self has by God's grace prevailed, the Hallel sounding the whole gamut of trust and despair, dejection and triumph, agony and release, with praise running through the whole, retells to Israel the story of his chequered national life, rejected by the builders yet become the corner-stone of God's house, taunted as a people God-forsaken yet secure in God's love, drinking the dregs of affliction yet bearing the cup of salvation to his lips.

"O Israel, trust thou in the Lord!
(He is their help and their shield.)

O house of Aaron, trust in the Lord!
(He is their help and their shield.)

Ye that fear the Lord, trust in the Lord!
(He is their help and their shield.)"

"The Lord hath been mindful of us: he will bless us;
He will bless the house of Israel;
He will bless the house of Aaron.
He will bless them that fear the Lord,
Both great and small."

A national history, yet more than national. For with Israel and Aaron's house "those who fear the Lord" are associated. "Those who fear the Lord" are, as many moderns, following the Rabbis, hold, none else than the proselytes to Judaism. And so in the midst of the Hallel rings out

the 117th Psalm, a Psalm which transcends nationality and absorbs within its scope the whole of mankind.

> "O praise the Lord, all ye nations;
> Laud Him, all ye peoples;
> For His kindness is mighty over us,
> And His truth endureth for ever.
> Praise ye the Lord."

"The shortest of the Psalms," as Dr. Kirkpatrick well puts it, "is one of the grandest. Its invitation to all nations to join in praising the Lord for His goodness to Israel is virtually a recognition that the ultimate object of Israel's calling was the salvation of the world." When Israel truly recognises this, the Hallel will again receive its antiphonal setting, Israel leading the song, with the world as answering chorus. The ministering angels, say the Rabbis, desired to sing Hallel to God when the Egyptians were overwhelmed at the Red Sea. But God refused. "Shall ye sing praises unto Me, while My children are sinking in the sea?" Israel can sing no true Hallel while its mission to God's other children is ignored or even belittled.

Nor is this world-embracing idea restricted to the 117th Psalm. The Hallel opens with the thought. Psalm cxiii. summons the servants of the Lord to praise His name, which is blessed from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof. One cannot fail to recall the similar phrase in Malachi (i. 11): "For, from the rising

of the sun even to the going down of the same, My name is great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense is offered to My name and a pure offering; for My name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord." In Malachi there is a deep and biting sarcasm in the thought; for the Israel of his day is perfunctory and even contemptuously indifferent, while the rest of the world, with varying rituals and creeds, is in essence true and loyal to God. But in the Hallel there is no sarcasm; the nations are bidden to praise, but Israel, the servant of God, leads. Psalm cxiii. opens:—

> "Praise ye the Lord.
> Praise, O ye servants of the Lord.
> Praise the name of the Lord."

And in Psalm cxvi. comes Israel's loyal acceptance of this honourable servitude:—

> "O Lord, truly I am Thy servant:
> I am Thy servant, the son of Thine handmaid:
> Thou hast loosed my bonds.
> I will offer to Thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving,
> And will call upon the name of the Lord.
> I will pay my vows unto the Lord,
> Yea in the presence of all His people;
> In the courts of the Lord's house,
> In the midst of thee, O Jerusalem.
> Hallelujah!"

All this is in Psalm cxvi. the answer to the question: "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits towards me?" *All His*

benefits: for as Psalm cxiii. so finely puts it, God is in heaven yet condescends to think of man.

> "The Lord is high above all nations,
> And His glory above the heavens.
>
> Who is like unto the Lord our God,
> That hath His seat on high,
> Yet humbleth Himself to behold
> The things that are in heaven and earth.
> He raiseth up the poor out of the dust,
> And lifteth up the needy from the dunghill;
> That He may set him with princes,
> Even with the princes of His people.
> He maketh the barren woman to keep house,
> A joyful mother of children.
> Hallelujah!"

Israel's God is transcendent. He is not to be measured by man's finitude. But though transcendent, high above earth and man, He is not far off. Outside the world, He is also in it. He loves to intervene in human affairs, He condescends to interest Himself in man's concerns. To this qualification of the transcendental view of the divine nature we shall return in the chapter on "Adon Olam."

And it is this divine sympathy with humanity that prompts man's praise of the Highest. The Jew singing the Hallel, to melodies varying with the festival but with unvarying zest and sincerity, thinks of God in this twofold aspect of aloofness and proximity, but chiefly of him in the latter aspect. And so our Russian immigrant loved

the Hallel. He could not spare it from the Passover eve. He had suffered, God had saved him. He could not but praise. All sacrifices shall cease in the world to come, said the Rabbi; but, he added, the sacrifice of thanksgiving shall endure for ever and ever. HALLELUJAH!

XXIII

THE FOUR SONS

The Episode of the Four Sons stands out, even amid the many felicities of the Passover Seder, as a supremely happy instance of insight into human nature. The Law, we are told, speaks of four types of children: the Wise, the Wicked, the Simple, and the Son Who Cannot Ask. Three of the four are questioners, only one is dumb. Is not this the right proportion? Man has been defined as this animal or that—certainly three-fourths of man is a questioning animal. The three sons who ask in varying phraseology questions concerning the Passover, represent all the inquisitive phases of the human intellect. But only one of the three—the "simple son"—asks his question without bias or motive. A full half of us are wanting in this single-hearted directness. A motive lies behind our questions, whether it be a good or an evil motive. The distinction between the wise son and the wicked does not lie in their questions, but in their ultimate aims. The wise son has the truer philosophy, for his question—"What is this Passover for *us?*"—leads him not from but to his kind. The wicked—with his cynical

question, "What is all this for *you?*"—demands of life its secrets; he would pluck out its mystery in order to tell us in the end that he stands outside our petty joys and pains. He is wicked, not because he scoffs or doubts, but because in the struggle in which he might bear a hand he stands outside.

This was partly the reason, I should think, why, in most of the illustrated copies of the Passover Haggadah, the wicked son is depicted as a soldier, armed with deadly weapons. In the Middle Ages the Jews had a bad opinion of militarism, an opinion derived from bitter experience. The soldier was the foe of society, not its friend. The wise son, naturally enough, wears a sedate beard, and holds himself like a serious sage in ample academic robes. The simple son stands in a careless attitude supported by a shepherd's staff, the voiceless son holds his hands in the air.

The source of this whole Episode of the Four Sons is the Midrash (Mechilta) and the Talmud (Palestinian). In the Bible four expressions are used with regard to the duty of narrating the story of the departure from Egypt. These are: Deuteronomy vi. 20; Exodus xii. 26; Exodus xiii. 14; Exodus xiii. 8. These passages, as the Midrash saw, fit roughly the four characters, but much ingenuity has been wasted in explaining the details. (For those who are interested in the matter, it will suffice to say that the key to the chief difficulty is found in the fact that

the Jerusalem Talmud read *us* for *you* in Deut. vi. 20; this reading is found in many of the oldest MSS. of the Haggadah.) I do not propose to discuss these details, but one point has somehow been missed by most commentators. It will be observed that, in replying to the wicked son and to the son who does not know how to ask, the self-same text is quoted. Why is this? Are the wicked and dumb on a level? The *Kolbo* replies in the affirmative, for he who knows not how to ask, who is so indifferent that his curiosity remains dormant when he sees the table prepared for the Passover service, such a one does not belong to the class for whom God would work a miracle like the redemption from Egypt. There is a deep truth here, and it is a fine rebuke to those who decry intellectual curiosity. The *Kolbo* would tell us that *theirs* is the sin, if the young are so dead to the call of religion that they have no impulse to ask a question about it.

Educationists have often remarked on the change which comes over a child between, say, its eighth and fifteenth years. At first, the child is always asking questions; later on he asks far fewer, lastly he asks none. Why? Because while the child can and will ask, the parent cannot or will not answer. It is the first step that costs. It is the greatest possible mistake to repress questions, to put the child off with "Wait till you are older." You thus stunt the natural growth of an inquiring mind. The young

child asks all sorts of questions about God and the Bible, and many parents give either answers that they know to be false, or give no answers at all. Hence the phenomenon of the deadly transformation of childish curiosity into adult indifference; the boy asks, the lad no longer cares.

The Passover Haggadah ought to teach Jewish parents a wiser policy. If there is one fact generally understood regarding the Passover Home Service, it is that the child has a special part and right in it. Possibly the very title of the service is derived from the Four Sons. The name *Haggadah*, or narrative, perhaps originated in a text (quoted above), in which is formulated the duty of telling the child the story of the Redemption: "And thou shalt tell (*higgadta*) thy son in that day, saying, It is because of that which the Lord did for me when I came forth out of Egypt" (Exod. xiii. 8.) Admittedly, the term *Haggadah* may, in the present case, be only a particular use of the word in its ordinary meaning of exposition or narration of the Scriptures. The body of the Passover Haggadah is an exposition of certain texts from Deuteronomy xxvi. Moreover the term *Haggadah* is not applied to the Passover service in the Mishnah, but is only so used in the Babylonian Talmud. Still, the connection between the title and the text just cited is too close to be ignored, and one may rest firm in the belief that the child gave the name to the rite of which he is the hero.

We scarcely maintain in modern times the

prominence due to the child on the Passover night. In the first place, so far as England is concerned, the child is hardly ever allowed his old privilege of asking his questions in the vernacular. The painful recitation of a set paragraph in difficult and archaic Hebrew does not arouse that vivid, real interest which would be produced by encouraging the child to put a few simple questions spontaneously in the child's mother tongue. It is unnecessary to enter historically into the point; it is unnecessary to explain how, in the medieval French rite as used also in the then French-speaking Anglo-Jewry, the first paragraphs of the Haggadah were translated into French. Nor need I recall the passage in the *Maharil*, which informs us that in the early fifteenth century the children of the Rhinelands used German in the Passover Haggadah, not only without rebuke but even with warm approval. One modern fact is worth a library of historical allusions. In Jerusalem I observed that the Arabic-speaking Yemenite Jews made their children ask their questions in Arabic, and I have since bought a copy of their Haggadah (printed in Jerusalem) in which the only Arabic part of the book is a shortened summary of the child's questions and the father's answers (a dozen lines in all), and this part is printed in far larger letters than the rest. It is very significant that in this Yemenite prayer book we are quite clearly informed that: "It is *usual* for the child to ask in Arabic."

Such wisdom seems beyond us in modern England. And we commit another folly. The ancient prescriptions are full of directions against delay in beginning the Haggadah. The table must be set by day, so that the Seder can begin directly night falls, and so forth. All this was for the benefit of the children. In England, as in foreign parts, we are far too late in beginning the Haggadah. The children are always asleep before the end because of this tardiness, and also because we (in common with foreign Jews) have changed the good old Mishnaic custom in which the *whole* Haggadah preceded supper, and was not cut into two by the meal. It is altogether indefensible to defer the synagogue service on the second night merely in order to say the Blessing of the Omer. In many editions of the Haggadah the Blessing of the Omer will be found. Why? Because it is best on the Passover night to say this Blessing at home and not in the synagogue. Adults may, as of old, sit up till midnight or dawn to discourse of the departure from Egypt, but the Seder is for the children also and first of all, and the synagogue service on the Passover should on both nights begin and end as early as possible.

These are not trifles; they display a pitiful indifference to the child. We must make Judaism once more interesting to young Israel, must arouse curiosity and frankly and fully satisfy it. True we must discriminate; what is suitable to one child of one age is not suitable

to every child of every age. The wise son in the Episode is alone he to whom the law of *Aphikomon* is explained. The *Aphikomon* was one of the after-dishes which followed the chief dish, some dessert or *bonne bouche*. Now, in the Mishnah which treats of the Passover one of the last paragraphs refers to this *Aphikomon*. Hence, when the parent is bidden to tell the wise son about the law of *Aphikomon*, the meaning is that nothing is to be withheld from him, he must be told everything from alpha to omega. Some children, no doubt, must be treated more tenderly, and not introduced to the whole story at one sitting. But the child, of whatever age and intellect, must be allowed or made to ask, and must be answered truthfully, though the answer must be adapted to the child's capacity. That capacity is greater than many of us think. The mother who deals most faithfully with her children in this respect is the least likely to find a "wicked son" in her nest. She is indeed the Virtuous Woman, whose "children shall rise up and call her blessed."

XXIV

"ADON OLAM"

THE medieval Hebrew hymn, "Adon Olam" ("Lord of the Universe"), runs as follows in the Rev. S. Singer's prose version ("Authorised Daily Prayer Book," p. 3).

"He is Lord of the Universe, who reigned ere any creature yet was formed:
At the time when all things were made by His desire, then was His name proclaimed King.
And after all things shall have had an end, He alone, the dreaded one, shall reign;
Who was, who is, and who will be in glory.
And He is One, and there is no second to compare to Him, to consort with Him.
Without beginning, without end: to Him belong strength and dominion.
And He is my God—my Redeemer liveth—and a rock in my travail in time of distress;
And He is my banner and my refuge, the portion of my cup on the day when I call.
Into His hand I commend my spirit, when I sleep and when I wake;
And with my spirit, my body also: the Lord is with me, and I will not fear."

A great German writer said: "To understand a poet you must go to the poet's land." That this oft-quoted maxim is true, need not be dis-

puted. You cannot understand the Greek dramatists unless you know something of the life of Athens in the fifth century B.C. You miss half the meaning of Shakespeare unless you are familiar with the England of Elizabeth.

So is it to a large extent with the Bible. The land throws light on the Book. In some cases the Book is unintelligible without a knowledge of the land. Who can appreciate the message of Jeremiah, unless the political situation of Jeremiah's day is realised?

Thus the maxim is true. But there is another side on which it is not so true. What if the poet's land be the human heart? In that case, the only historical or geographical knowledge required is a knowledge of one's own heart. A whole series of the poems which have most moved humanity have been anonymous. There are many Psalms whose authorship and date are not known with precision. These Psalms speak to us with the voice, not of this or that poet, but with the voice of poetry itself. The personality of the authors is veiled in mystery, yet the Psalms touch our innermost personality.

Among the later hymns of the Synagogue, written almost entirely in the Middle Ages, there are many fine lyrics whose authors we know well, whose names and careers are as familiar as their work. In the Jewish Service Book, Ibn Gebirol and Jehuda Halevi are well represented; gifted poets both, who added immortal songs to Israel's golden treasury. From the Arab culture of

Moorish Spain, these writers drew ornament and style wherewith to re-gild Israel's harp, tarnished with disuse, yet ready to respond again to the inspired artist's touch. To appreciate the genius of these poets, it is useful to know their careers and the conditions of their age. But the finest poem added to our liturgy since Bible times, the most popular, the most commonly used, is anonymous. Research, keen and constant, has so far failed to discover the author and date of the hymn "Adon Olam." All that we can assert with confidence is that "Adon Olam" belongs to the Gaonic age, but we cannot even assign the century which saw its composition. Do we feel this as loss? Nay, we can quite understand "Adon Olam," despite our ignorance of its date or authorship. The beauty of its form, the simplicity of its language, the sublimity of its thought, all these clearly recognisable qualities are not more insistent than is the personal appeal which it makes to every Jewish heart and mind. It is at once elevated and tender. It pronounces in its opening lines the lonely majesty of God; it ends off with the most human of human cries.

But before we come to the internal beauties of the hymn, a little more must be said of its externals. The Hebrew of "Adon Olam" is metrical, and every line ends with the same sound. Both these features mark off the medieval from the biblical Hebrew poetry. In the Bible there is artistic form, rhythm, a harmonious modulation

of phrases, a parallelism of lines, but there is no discernible rigidity of metre, and there is certainly no regular rhyme. Medieval Hebrew poetry thus assumed meretricious fetters to its freedom, and I venture to doubt whether the genius of the Hebrew language will ever regain its full beauty and power in the poetical realm so long as Hebrew writers misapply to Hebrew the uncongenial restraints of rhyme and scansion. But there are masterpieces which must give the critic pause, for in a hymn such as "Adon Olam" rhyme and metre prevail, yet no evil results; on the contrary, one can detect good. For the metrical form, with its regular recurrent beats, has wedded "Adon Olam" to simple melody such as all can sing. The tunes composed for "Adon Olam" are among the happiest efforts of Jewish composers, and of Jewish adaptors of other people's tunes.

Again, externally, "Adon Olam" has gained enormously by a happy accident. Baer, the great commentator on the Jewish liturgy, tells us that he does not know how this accident occurred, and he rather seems to regret it. If you will turn to page 3 of the "Authorised Daily Prayer Book," you will see that the Hebrew of "Adon Olam" contains, in the Ashkenazic version, ten lines, but originally "Adon Olam" contained twelve lines, all of which are still used in the Spanish and some other rites. One is tempted to think that these extra lines are an interpolation, but if (as seems likely) they are original, then never was there a more fortunate

instance of maiming. The extra or omitted lines belong between lines 6 and 7 of our version. Here is an exact translation of the expunged verses: "Without comparison, similitude, diversity, mutation, conjunction, or divisibility, great is He in power and excellency." Every one of these terms is technically metaphysical, and some of the corresponding Hebrew words are so late that they are most probably medieval formations. Heine must have been thinking of these omitted lines, and of another dogmatic hymn, "Yigdal," when he uttered his famous sarcasm that the Jews pray in metaphysics. So wonderful, however, is the change effected in the whole character of "Adon Olam" by the suppression of these technical lines, that some will be surprised to be told that "Adon Olam" is a dogmatic hymn at all. Yet the main charm of "Adon Olam" lies in the subtle manner in which Jewish dogmatics are associated with the very simplest spiritual emotions.

What are the dogmas that "Adon Olam" enunciates? In the first four lines we have a picture of God, the eternal God, existing before the creation of the world, existing still when the world shall cease to be. Between the eternal past and the eternal future comes the world of time. Here we have purely Jewish dogmatics. Aristotle held that the world was eternal, Judaism held that it was created. It is God alone who is eternal. Further Judaism conceives of God as Something apart from His world. This, put

into philosophical language, is what is meant by saying that Judaism regards God as transcendental. He transcends man and the universe. God is incomparable, the mind cannot grasp or define him. He is "deep, deep, beyond all fathoming; far, far, beyond all measuring." He contains space, space does not contain Him. Now, if Judaism had ended there, we should, indeed, have a great God, but a God so far removed from humanity, so unapproachable, that an intimate spiritual relation between man and His Maker would be impossible. In fact, this is where Mohammedanism has ended. In Mohammedanism God is so transcendental, so removed from the world of man, so completely an Abstraction, that communion between the human soul and the divine loses much of its emotional value. Mohammedanism has thus produced no psalm or hymn which has been incorporated into the Western world's spiritual store. But, on the other hand, the opposite extreme is equally dangerous. The immanent God dwells within the human soul as well as within the world. If you push the transcendental theory too far, God becomes an abstraction; if you push the immanent theory too far, God becomes incarnate in man.

Thus, at the one extreme stands Mohammedanism, and at the other Christianity. Judaism stands between. God, in the Jewish view, is at once transcendental and immanent; He is not man, yet man is akin to Him: He is high above

the world, yet is nigh to them that call upon Him. The Law brings God to man; prayer brings man to God. The revelation of God to man is the ladder by which God descends to man, by which man rises to meet God as it were half-way. Jewish theology is, in many respects, a harmony between opposites, and in no respect is it so successful as in its harmony between the grandeur of God and the lowliness of the human soul, between the Father in heaven and the child on earth. To quit these difficult speculations, it is almost astounding to notice the felicitous ease with which "Adon Olam," starting with a most transcendental view of God, refuses to rest there, but assumes a more and more immanent theory as it proceeds. It is less a harmony than a transition. The God who stands high above creation is the One into whose hand man commits himself without fear. The Majestic King is also the Redeemer. The great lone God is a Refuge in man's distress. He does not merely raise a banner, He is the Banner; He does not only hold out the cup of salvation, He is the consummate Cup. Let us now examine some of the figures and phrases of "Adon Olam" more closely.

God was before the world. God will be after the world—yet: "At the time when all things were made by His desire, then was His name proclaimed King." God reigned, but was only known as King when man was there to proclaim Him. God is, as it were, effectively King

when man acknowledges His kingship. And so, according to the Rabbis, the first duty of the Israelite is to accept the Divine Kingship—the duty which is fulfilled in words when the worshipper on reciting "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One," follows this up with the response: "Blessed be the name of the glory of His Kingdom for ever and ever." This response does not occur in the Scriptures but was the form of adoration used in the Temple when God's name was pronounced. But the duty is only half-fulfilled by verbal homage. The Jew must accept "the yoke of the kingdom" in deed as well as in word. In humble obedience, in eager service, in willing self-sacrifice, he must manifest allegiance to his King. His life must so reveal the effects of His reign over him that all the world will yearn to enter His service, and the Lord may in truth be King over all the earth, the ultimate goal attained, and He reigning alone supreme. It is a responsibility as glorious as it is grave that "Adon Olam" implies. We enthrone God when we are loyal to Him; we dethrone God when we are faithless. As the Rabbis said, if the community of Israel, fails to bear the yoke of the kingdom, with its privileges and obligations, then it profanes God's name. The dignity and significance of God's Kingship is lowered if they who should be the first among His subjects are first among His rebels. Though God reigns on despite such disloyalty, the world is relegated to that primeval

chaos in which God was, yet no man lived to proclaim Him King. But God "dwelleth amid the praises of Israel."

Then "Adon Olam" proceeds to enunciate the dogma of the Divine Unity: "And He is One, and there is no second to compare to Him, to consort with Him: Without beginning, without end: To Him belong strength and dominion." The dogma of the unity, expressed in these unequivocal terms, remains specifically the distinguishing mark of Judaism. But though "Adon Olam" is in this matter uncompromisingly Jewish, there is nothing of particularism in the whole poem. "Adon Olam" is not only one of the most Jewish, it is also one of the most universalistic of the medieval Hebrew hymns. "Yigdal" is a dogmatic hymn, which contains articles of creed which many Jews do not accept; "Adon Olam" is an expression of the Judaism of the undivided house of Israel. But more than this. Though thoroughly Jewish, "Adon Olam" is also humanitarian. God is One, and as a corollary mankind is one. In all the wealth of images by which "Adon Olam" illustrates God's love and providence, the appeal is never racial; it is God's children that the hymn has thought for. It is noteworthy that "Adon Olam" derives one of its finest phrases from Job—itself, perhaps, the most universalistic book in the Bible. Job, in the depth of his sorrow, exclaimed: "I know that my Redeemer liveth," and this phrase is taken up, in a different sense, perhaps, in "Adon Olam": "And

He is my God—my Redeemer liveth—a Rock in my travail in time of distress."

In understanding this figure of the Rock, one must not think of the sea, for the figure is taken from the hills. In Palestine the fortified places are all on heights, in fact the chief cities lie on hill slopes. The Rock of "Adon Olam" is such a mountain-stronghold, whither the men of the plains could flee for refuge from their foes. Steadfast as the hills, the Divine Rock is immovable, impregnable. Then, God is also a Banner, a rallying point fixed on one of these mountain-heights, calling the fugitive home, cheering the weak-hearted, at once an incentive to courage and a symbol of safety. And these figures are finely rounded off with the phrase: "He is the portion of my cup whenever I call," the cup of salvation, of good fortune, and happiness, such as God holds ready, if man will but ask for it, or take it from Him unasked, and set it to his lips.

And now we reach the most affecting stanza of all. We began with the majestic God, we end with the lowly human soul, brought nigh to God by simple faith in Him. "Into His hand I commend my spirit, when I sleep and when I wake; and with my spirit, my body also: the Lord is with me and I will not fear."

This concluding section of the hymn has led to the suggestion that "Adon Olam" is a night prayer, and it is very probable that this is the

case. In some liturgies, the only occasions on which "Adon Olam" is sung are certain solemn evenings, such as the Eve of the Day of Atonement. Many Jews recite "Adon Olam" every night, just before retiring to rest, and the habit is a very good one. So, too, "Adon Olam" is the hymn used at the death-bed. The soul falls asleep cheered by these words of simple faith, upborne by the sure hope that the awakening will be in presence of the Father.

Yes, it is a simple faith: it is also the final word of religion. All other doctrines of Judaism are ingredients of the religion, but they are all mere handmaids to this master doctrine—this simple faith of the child in God's unity, eternity, and love. It is the faith of the child who goes to sleep in its mother's arms. The fluttering fears of the dark are soothed by its full assurance that the mother is there. Its sense of the mother's presence bridges over for the child the awful chasm between consciousness and unconsciousness. Its sense of the mother's presence is its only link between night and morning. What are we all but children in this respect? Nay, what are we at all, unless we be as children? Grown-up men and women we are not, if we have lost our child-like confidence in the Father's eternity and love.

"So runs my dream: but what am I?
An infant crying in the night!
An infant crying for the light!
And with no language but a cry."

But why does Tennyson use the figure as an expression of despair? / We can only approach God with an infant-cry? / But it is just this pitiful infant-cry that goes quickest to the Father's heart. So men must cast off pride before God; they must go to Him, not as those who see, but as those who grope; not as those who know, but as those who trust. Life is a riddle, and the grave is an abyss which no philosophy can span, But does not each morn give the lie to the fears of yesternight? Can we not, like the child, find in the sense of the eternal presence of our loving Father, the assurance of our own immortality? Does not His eternity link with eternity our fleeting days and nights? Each morning reveals that the night has passed. And when the long night comes, which has no morning for us on earth, shall not our simple faith make easy for us the passage to that heavenly day which has never a night to it? As a fine version of the last stanza of "Adon Olam" runs :—

> "To Him my spirit I consign :
> Asleep, awake, I will not fear;
> My body, too, I do resign ;
> I dread no evil; God is near."

Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & Co.
Edinburgh & London

Date Due

Dec16 53

MA